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THE BIBLE JEWS AND JUDAISM IN AMERICAN POETRY

By

RABBI LEON SPITZ

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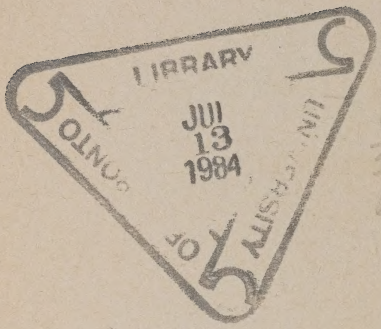

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To

My Wife

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CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

1. America had no poets worthy of the name during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. Poetry and simultaneously Biblical influence upon American poetry begins with the early part of the nineteenth century. We except the early Puritan prose-poetry, sermons and diaries, hymns and Psalms which possess no literary but possibly historical merit.

It is interesting to note that the Revolutionary intellectuals were atheistically, or more accurately, deistically inclined. Thomas Paine, a dissenting minster, who spent some time in America during the Revolutonary period, wrote at Paris his atheistic "The Age of Reason" which had quite a circulation in the United States, even though it was condemned by the American clergy. Paine attacked both the Old and New Testament as "sacerdotal frauds, literary impositions filled with lies and absurdities" (Prof. Henry A. Beers in Initial Studies in American Letters). Both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were either avowed or secret deists. Three quarters of a century later, Emerson, the apostle of the Concord poets and writers was a transcendentalist and quite a radical in matters theological, and he was not alone among the thinkers of his time, in this position. A poet like Edgar Allen Poe could not very well be influenced to any large extent by the spirit of the Bible, and Walt Whitman and Bret Harte among the mod-

erns may be associated with him. The tendency of contemporary poetry does not lean towards the Bible, its sentiments, its spirit, its style.

2. Yet, with due regard to all that has been said, it may be emphatically asserted that the Bible has exerted a tremendous influence upon the spirit, the content, the style, the sentiment, the philosophy of American poetry. There is not a single poet who is free from Biblical influence. Even Emerson and Poe, and Field, and Whitman, and Riley and Lanier owe a debt of gratitude to Biblical nurture. Bryant, first of America's great poets has shown the way to the Bible. Lowell, Holmes and Longfellow have trodden upon the path with confidence and with frequency, and Whittier may justly be crowned, The American Bible Poet. It is clearly and readily apparent that the soil of Puritan New England has given birth to and has bred America's Bible poets, even if we admit that Emerson did glance rather quizzically now and then and even though Holmes forgot himself too often in his changing moods toward the Bible.

3. Longfellow, Whittier and Holmes are concerned with Talmudic or more correctly with Midrashic lore, Holmes unsympathetically. Longfellow, Holmes and Field display some interest in Jewish life. Whittier evidences a love for the Holy Land; and, on the whole, the attitude of these poets is sympathetic and the topics treated are of interest both to the Jewish and to the general reader.

CHAPTER II.

The Bible and America's First Poet.

Bryant and the Bible.

1. William Cullen Bryant, the first and pioneer of America's great poets, was born at a little Massachusetts town on November 3rd, 1794. He was a descendant of the Pilgrim Fathers and notably of John Alden of colonial fame. A literary career could only be regarded as a luxury in those days and Bryant went into law and into state politics. But the muse claimed him already as a child and Bible tales were familiar to him almost from his cradle days, and so the poet candidly tells us that on his ninth year he turned the Book of Job into verse and he even affords us a sample:

> "His name was Job, evil he did eschew
> To him were born several sons: three daughters, too."

He also paraphrased the Hundred and Fourth psalm. We have also some sort of a version of David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (cf. 2 Samuel I, 19) in an adaptation from the Latin. "Thanatopsis," one of the finest works in American literature, was written at the age of sixteen, but had been revised at the time of its publication in 1816. The poem deals in a high and serious strain of the themes of Life and Death. Of nature, the poet affirms "she speaks a various language," she calls us to life and also bids us face death with courage:

> "Thou shalt lie down
> With patriarchs of the infant world, with kings
> The powerful of the Earth, the wise, the good
> Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past
> All in one mighty sepulchre.
> All that breathe will share thy destiny."

and he concludes with the imperishable lines, so well familiar even to the school child:

"So live that when thy summons comes to join," etc.

We meet a Biblical influence in numerous phrases, as, hosts of heaven, wings of morning, chamber in the silent halls of death, quarry slave, etc., but surely the sentiment is Biblical, so familiarly reminiscent of the wisdom of Ecclesiastes, of the philosophic contemplation of the Prophets, of the thought so oft expressed in the well worn Bible phrase: "And he was gathered unto his fathers."

2. In disclosing the nature of the Biblical influence in this poem we have a characteristic specimen for our observation, and we arrive at the sufficient conclusion that taken as an average, a poem from Bryant's pen has been inspired by Biblical sentiment, and is revealed by its near-Biblical style, while it is even betrayed here and there by an expression, a term, a word, culled right out from the Scriptures. Of his hymns perhaps another tale is to be told, and he also has a number of Biblical episodes rendered into admirable verse.

3. What is true of "Thanatopsis" is also true of "To a Waterfowl." The Biblical sentiment furnishes the motiff and pervades the atmosphere. A single stanza will suffice to illustrate:

"He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright."

and in "The Ages":

"Will then the Merciful One who stamped our race
With His own image and who gave them sway
O'er earth, and the glad dwellers on his face."
(cf. Genesis I)

"———and then forgot
The truth of heaven and kneeled to gods that heard them not.
Then waited not the murderer for the night,
But smote his brother down in the bright day."

lines probably reminiscent of Cain's murder of Abel.

4. In "Inscription For The Entrance to a Wood," we meet the cheering sentiment that:

"The primal curse
Fell, it is true, upon the unsinning earth
But not in vengeance."

An interesting reference is afforded in "The Burial Place":

"The Pilgrim bands who passed the sea to keep
Their Sabbaths in the eye of God alone
In His wide temple of the wilderness."

5. Even from these few poems that deal so finely "with the calming, bracing, purifying influence of nature," as Henry A. Beers puts it, we realize how fully he filled the office which Matthew Arnold asserts to belong to modern poetry, "the moral interpretation of Nature."

BRYANT AND THE PSALTER

6. If any distinct portion of the Scriptures has exerted an especially marked influence on Bryant, it was the Psalter. Its spirit, its sentiments, its style, its very language are native elements to the nature of the New England-New York poet. He wrote a considerable number of hymns and an even larger number of poems which are hymns in all but the name. Among his "Hymns Written at Various Times" we meet titles based on Biblical phrases and sentiments; "Thy Earth is Full of Thy Riches," "His Tender

Mercies are Over all His Works," "A Broken and Contrite Heart, O God Thou Wilt Not Despise," "How Amiable are Thy Tabernacles," "Except the Lord Built the House," "Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land," and others.

7. Yet the spirit of the Psalter is not restricted to the definitely so entitled hymns. All of his lines that reflect on the glories of nature and of the Master of the Universe are permeated by this self-same atmosphere. Perhaps his finest hymn bears the title, "Blessed are They That Mourn." It offers comfort:

> "Nor let the good man's trust depart
> For God hath marked each sorrowing day
> And numbered every secret tear."

8. "Hymn to Death" is a clever parody, one of the poet's numbered departures from his habitual austerity. The poet pleads with the "wise and pure of heart" to join with him in paying the tribute due to Death:

> "God hath appointed thee to free the oppressed
> Else the mighty of the olden times
> Nimrod——would still hold sway."

else "Idolatry would still be rampant," else "He who bears false witness" and "He who spreads abroad polluted hands in mockery of prayer" (cf. Isaiah I, 15) would still be alive and practice their wiles. The very thought of Death as a deliverer from life's sorrows, and as well the blotter of wickedness, is oft to be encountered in the Book of Job, in the Psalter, in the Prophets. A reflection of the heat of the noon hour calls up in "Noon" lines such as:

> "'Tis noon, at noon the Hebrew bowed the knee
> And worshipped."

And the noon hour offers a silence, "the brief Sabbath of an hour."

9. A number of anti-slavery poems show some Biblical influence: In "The Antiquity of Freedom," freedom is claimed as the birth-right of man, it was an element of creation even in the days when the earth was still "soft with the deluge." It is unaccountable that the poet recalls in this connection the tyranny of Rome and forgets the oppression of Egypt. "The Death of Slavery" brings lines:

> "For he who marks the bounds of guilty power
> Long suffering, hath heard the captive's cry."

and at the triumph of abolition, exultant:

> "Our rivers roll exulting, and theirs banks
> Send up hosannas to the firmament" (cf. Psalm II, 4)

He bids farewell to the institution of slavery:

> "Go now accursed of God," "worship of Moloch."

10. Numerous poems are devoted to the narration of the youth of the world and of the early stages of creation. In "Seventy Six," nature

> "Grew quick wih God's creating breath."

In "The Song of the Stars," we read:

> "When he radiant morn of creation broke
> And the world in the smile of God awoke
> And the empty realms of darkness and death
> Were moved through their depths by His mighty breath."
> (cf. Genesis, I, 1-2)

That awe for the majesty of nature and that deep reverence for the almighty power of the Creator that was borne upon Job, as the answer to his queries, is a free endowment of the soul of our American Psalmist-poet.

BRYANT AND BIBLE LORE

11. Bryant by no means makes extravagant use of Bible lore and yet he does couch some noble sentiments in

the garb of "Scriptural episodes: "No Man Knoweth His Sepulchre" holds a noble thought based on its title as a text:

"When he from the scourge of wrong
Aroused the Hebrew tribes to fly
And led him on the hills to die;
God made his grave to men unknown."

and our poet observes:

"Thus still,, whene'er the good and just
Close the dim eye and life and pain
Though nameless, trampled and forgot
His servant's humble ashes lie
Yet God hath marked and sealed the spot
To call His intimate to the sky."

12. On one occasion, Bryant witnessed the excavation of a skeleton, and this led him to write "The Disinterred Warrior." The poet exclaims:

"Bury him again,
Nor dare to trifle with the mould
Once hallowed by the Almighty's breath,
God's own image."

In "To The Appenines," on meditating on that scene of many wars:

Trode out their lives and earned the curse of Cain."
"And commonwealths against their rivals rose,
"Here pealed the impious hymns and altar flames
Rose to false gods."

In "A Lifetime" we have a pleasing picture of:

"And there the child is standing
By a stately lady's knee
And reading of ancient peoples
And realms beyond the sea.

Of the cruel king of Egypt
Who made God's people slaves
And perished with all his army
Drowned in the Red Sea waves.

"Of Deborah who mustered
Her brothers long oppressed
And routed the heathen army
And gave her people rest."

13. Yet the finest and most pathetic work of Bryant is an elaboration of the story of the unfortunate Rizpah, who watched the corpses of her sons and 'suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.' (2 Samuel. xxi. 10).

In this poem we hear in the author's own words

"The low heartbroken and wailing strain
Of a mother that mourns her children slain."

"Hear what the desolate Rizpah said
As on Gelbaoh's rock she watched the dead,
The sons of Michal before her lay
And her own fair children dearer than they"

"Ye fell in your fresh and blooming prime
All innocent, for your father's crime";

for Saul, their father, has slain the Gibeonites, contrary to the oath of Joshua and the Elders.

"He sinned, but he paid the price of his guilt
When his blood by a nameless hand was spilt."

We recall Saul's last battle with the Philistines, in which he was presumably slain by an Amalekite. Cf 1 Sam xxxi.4; 2 Sam. i, 6-1

"And the sceptre his childrens' hands should sway
From his injured lineage passed away."

The poet recalls the personality and the appearance of Saul

"Tall like their sire, with the princely grace
Of his stately form and the bloom of his face."
(cf. I Samuel, x, 23, 24)

CONCLUSION.

14. This much may be justly estimated of Biblical influence on Bryant. Throughout his poetic works there breathes a spirit of high solemnity, of austere chastity, and of deep reverence. A style, rich and lusty with strength and power that unquestionably have their origin in a nature saturated with the style and the speech of the Psalter; and sentiments truly inspired by the spirit of the Bible, sentiments of reverence, of worship, of nobility and dignity, of humility and saintliness—of saintliness and not of sanctimoniousness, of humility but yet not of slavish submission, of reverence but not at all of despair nor of overwhelming dread and terror. The strong and courageous spirit with which Jehovah was wont to fill the souls of Hebrew patriarchs and seers and warriors—was the spirit that stirred and fired the soul of this first of America's galaxy of renowned bards. In his successors, in Longfellow and in Whittier, and even in Lowell, the influence of the Bible is more subtly revealed, more artistically fashioned, more richly utilized, yet the spirit of the Bible is strong in the soul of America's pathfinder poet; and it need not be a vain thought that Bryant pointed out, in a larger sense than his rather crude and unrecognized predecessors,—the way to the New England poets who followed him—the way to the Biblical spirit, to the Biblical style, to the Biblical speech, to the Biblical lore, and especially to the Psalter.

CHAPTER III.

Longfellow's Jewish Poetry.

1. Jewish poetry is poetry that deals with Jewish life; that reflects thoughts and stories from Jewish sources. Longfellow has considerable of Jewish poetry to his credit. He is, like all New England poets, filled with the spirit of the Bible, and makes frequent and excellent use of Biblical lore and Biblical thought. In that charming pastoral, Evangeline, in his Indian epic, Hiawatha, in his religious Mystery, in his Courtship of Miles Standish, in his many sonnets and poems of every variety, Biblical language, the Biblical spirit, Biblical characters and Biblical lore meet as a matter of course.

The great American student and poet possessed a nature and a mind that were receptive to the thought and the spirit of many races and peoples of many lands. He had a warm corner in his heart for the Jewish people and he wrote many poems of Jewish tradition and history.

THE BIBLE IN LONGFELLOW.

2. The Courtship of Miles Standish, the Puritan love story, is quite reminiscent of the Biblical story of Ruth. The spirit of the Bible is a living force in the hearts of its heroes. When Alden, who had been sent by his friend, Captain Standish, to woo the fair Priscilla for him, finds himself in love with the maiden, and about to betray his friend's trust, his conscience smites him, and:

"Then within him thundereth a voice like the voice of the Prophet, 'It hath displeased the Lord,' and thought of David's transgression Bathsheva's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the battle."

3. The Pilgrim warriors, on their first encounter with the Indians as they go forth to battle with them, think of themselves and our poet, too, thinks of them as:

"The mighty men of King David,
Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and the Bible
And who believed in the smiting of Midianites and Philistines."

The Indians were to them:

"Huge as Goliath of Gath or the ———— Og, King of Bashan"

they deemed their land fertile and prosperous and watered by the rivers that watered the Garden of Eden. The Pilgrim maiden and her charms are set forth in the very words of the closing chapter of the Book of Proverbs. The scene of the wedding is charmingly laid in a Biblical setting, in a lovely spot, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden and enclosed about by "the clusters that grow in the valley of Eschol." It was a sunny day and we have an elaborate simile:

"The sun—the great high priest in his garments resplendent
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light on his forehead
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and pomegranates."

This may well remind us of a sublime Yom Kippur hymn. The bride and bridegroom, of course, are likened to Ruth and Boaz.

4. But we have still a mass of Biblical lore and of Scriptural phrasings running through the poem.

As Standish narrates his narrow escape in the Fleming campaign, Alden says, piously:

"Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of the bullet;
He in His mercy preserved you to be our shield and our weapon."

Standish has a Bible in his library and to plan out his campaign of war he consults Caesar or "whether the wars of the Hebrew." The Captain rather embarrassed in speaking of his intention to propose to Priscilla, finally blurts out, "'Tis not good for man to be alone, say the Scriptures." (Genesis, 1, 11-18.)

Alden reproaches himself, in his trouble;

"This is the hand of the Lord: it is laid upon me in anger
For I have followed too much the heart's desires and devices,
Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal."

On the occassion of his visit, he finds Priscilla "singing the Hundredth Psalm, the grand Old Puritan anthem."

After Priscilla confesses her love for him, Alden exclaims:

"It is the will of the Lord: and his mercy endureth forever."

As he decides to return to England, to place the ocean between himself and his love, he feels,

"Yes,.....the hand of the Lord
Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its waters around me."

5. The sun shone at the arrival of 'Mayflower'

"Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the mountain"
(cf. Song of Songs and Isaiah L 11.7)

Alden watched "the wash of the billows
Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over the waters"
(cf. Gen. 1, 2)

The rivers of the land,

"and truly they seem to me always
More like the beautiful rivers that watered the garden of Eden,
More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of Havilah flowing.

As Alden is about to give his love the first kiss,

"Thus, as a Pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem journeys,
Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly backward,
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs of contrition,
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet even advancing,
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of his longings,
Urged by the fervour of love, and withheld by remorseful misgivings"
"Simple and brief was the wedding as that of Ruth and Boaz"
And the whole land just then "it seemed as the Garden of Eden
Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was the sound of the ocean."

The bridal procession moved to their new habitation, clustered with grapes, "wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the valley of Eschol" (Deuter. 1, 19-25)

"Like a picture it seemed of the primitive pastoral ages
Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling Rebecca and Isaac."
(cf. Genesis xxiv)

EVANGELINE.

6. In Evangeline, too, we meet with a dozen or more allusions to Bible lore: "wrestled the trees in the forest, as Jacob of old with the Angel," the Arcadian fugitives wandered away from home, "As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael with Hagar," the old priest rose "on the ardour of prayer, like Elijah ascending to heaven," and the sadness and sorrow of the village folks "veiled the light of his face like the Prophet's descending from Sinai," and once again the Arcadians wandering about in search of a new home, are compared to "the scattering tribes of Ishmael's children." Longfellow also presents a peculiar simile in describing the dying Gabriel in fever;

"As if the Hebrew with blood had besprinkled its portals
That the Angel of Death might see the sign and passover."

In Part II, Legend II:

"Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder of Jacob
On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending descending."

He has quite a flattering opinion of Louisiana:

"They who dwelt there called it "The Eden of Louisiana."

There is an allusion, in the foreboding of Evangeline to the forewarning for Babylon, in the Book of Daniel:

"As if a hand had appeared and written upon them 'Upharsin.'"

7. There are a few score of instances of Bible lore and influences of Biblical style in numerous other poems:

The flowers 'stand like Ruth mid the golden corn' (Flowers)
We hear of 'the dusky sandled Eve' (The Spirit of Poetry)
The hymn or psalm, "In exitu Israel de Aygypto" is found in a fragmentary translation from Dante (The Celestial Pilot) 'at the gates of Jericho' (Blind Bartimeus).

William E. Channing is termed "Servant of God" (To Channing).

In 'The Spanish Student' we record several references, as follows: "the history of the world brought down from Genesis to the Day of Judgment," "It was a serpent tempted Eve to sin."

"Ere these words of anger
Were in the Book of Heaven writ down"
"The Day of Judgment"

The golden sun poured in thru the closed blinds;

"Like the celestial ladder seen
By Jacob in his dream"

The lover listening to the sermon on Ruth did not mind its length:

"For he spake of Ruth the beautiful
And still I thought of thee" (A Gleam of Sunshine)
"King, like David, priest, like Aaron" (The Norman Baron)
The clock "as if like God it all things saw" (The Old Clock on the Stairs)

"The heart of Rachel for her children crying
Will not be comforted" (Resignation)
"Perhaps the camels of the Ishmaelite
Trampled and passed it o'er,
When into Egypt from the patriarch's sight
His favorite son they bore."

"Perhaps the feet of Moses, burnt and bare,
Crushed it beneath their thread,
Or Pharaoh's flashing wheels into the air
Scattered it as they sped" (Sand of the Desert In An Hour Glass)

We thus have in these two stanzas allusions to the selling of Joseph by his brothers, to Moses wandering in the desert of Midian, and to the overthrow of Pharah at the Red Sea.

"The falling mantle of the Prophet" (A Summer Day by the Sea)
"All, all is vanity" (Belizarius)
"Being pressed down somewhat, like a cart with sheaves overladen,
As she would sometimes say to Joseph, quoting the Scriptures."
(Tales of a Wayside Inn.)

8. The Children of The Lord's Supper is an adaptation from the Swedish and it, too, has quite a number of interesting references:

"the preacher's pulpit of oakwood
Budded once more anew, as aforetime the rod before Aaron"
The mighty tones of the organ hover aloft
"Like as Elias in heaven, when he cast from off him his mantle"
"And each face did shine like the holy One's face upon Tabor"
The Teacher spoke in gentle accents soft
"as harps by Babylon's rivers."
—(cf. Psalms)
"The Serpahs adoring, cover with pinions six their face in the Glory of Him who, Hung his masonry pendant on naught, when the world he created."
—(cf. Isaiah VI.)

LONGFELLOW'S IDEALS AND SENTIMENTS.

9. Like any and all thinkers, Longfellow had his sentiments and ideals and he had his part in the life about him and his viewpoint of the problems of his day. So strong was the spirit of the Bible in him that he would invariably look to the Bible for a basis and for a background for the expression of his hopes and of his thoughts. His own life ran along smoothly and serenely, he was given over to study and to contemplation, refusing to be cast into the seething strife of the social questions of the hour. He thinks of the call of the spiritual life in prophetic terms:

"God's voice was not in the earthquake,
Not in the fire nor in the storm but it
Was in the whispering breezes."

His philosophy of life which is not perhaps truly his own unless it be that of his youth, comes to us in the celebrated little poem, "The Psalm of Life." The heart of the young man tells him that "life is not an empty dream" and that

> "Dust thou art to dust returnest,
> Was not spoken of the soul."

10. Once again does our poet enter into the real spirit of the prophet of universal peace, which was one of his own most sincere strivings, "The Arsenal at Springfield," but repeats the prophecy of Isaiah that no "nation should lift up again its hand against a brother." Longfellow pleads with man for peace, and pictures the horrors of war, and appeals to man's sentiment, to his logic and to his religion.

11. Longfellow would not accept a political leadership on the abolition question, but still he was for freeing the negro, with all his heart and all his soul, and here again he turned to the Bible for inspiration in the expression of his sentiments. His "Poems in Slavery" are a fervent plea for the emancipation of the negro. In "The Slave in the Dismal Swamp," we have a most pathetic portraiture of the fugitive, who lies in the swamp, listening to the birds who fill the echoing air with songs of liberty and sees about him untrammelled nature, while,

> "On him alone was the doom of pain
> From the morning of his birth:
> On him alone the curse of Cain."

12. We have an interesting sketch of the negro's religious nature in "The Slave Singing at Midnight."

> "Loud he sang the Psalm of David.
> He, a Negro and enslaved
> Sang of Israel's victory.
> Sang of Zion bright and free."

"In that hour when night is calmest,
Sang he from the Hebrew Psalmist,
In a voice so sweet and clear,
That I could not choose but hear."

"Songs of triumph, and ascriptions,
Such as reached the swart Egyptians,
When upon the Red Sea coast,
Perished Pharaoh and his host."

Our poet reflects upon the irony of the slave singing these hymns, and expresses the hope for his liberation. The last of this group of poems, "The Warning," is a powerful warning indeed to the white man of the consequences of slavery. The negro is compared to Sampson:

"The Israelite of old, who tore
The lion in his path, when poor and blind
He saw the blessed light of heaven no more,
Shorn of his noble strength and forced to grind
In prison and at last led forth to be
A pander to Philistine revelry,—

Upon the pillars of the Temple laid
His desperate hands, and in its overthrow
Destroyed himself and with him those who made
A cruel mockery of his sightless woe;
The poor, blind slave, the scoff and jest of all,
Expired and thousands perished in the fall!"

IN THE REALMS OF THE TALMUD AND MIDRASH.

13. Lognfellow has a great love for the Talmud, the source of some of his inspiration. He beautifully and lovingly sings of it as

"That book of gems, that book of gold
Of wonders many and manifold."

He delights in its fancies but fails to enter into and to make use of its spiritual depths and of its profound wisdom. He is the artist student of the Talmud surface beauty and weirdness and withal maintains a certain reverence for it. One of his most charming poems is unquestionably, "Sandalphon." He introduces the Talmudic thought-gem so simply and naively:

> "Have you read in the Talmud of old
> In the legends the Rabbis have told,
> Of the limitless realms of the air,
> Have you read it—the marvelous story,
> Of Sandalphon the Angel of Glory,
> Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer."

He stands at the portals of Heaven, at the top rung of Jacob's ladder, he stands listening breathless to sounds that ascend from the earth below: to the sounds of the prayers of the pure souls and to the plaints of broken hearts,

> "And he gathers the prayers as he stands
> And they change into flowers in his hands."

14. In his Tales of a Wayside Inn one of the story tellers is a Spanish Jew who recounts some legends of the Angel of Death, Azrael. He first tells the mystic tale of

> "Rabbi ben Levi, on the Sabbath read
> A volume of the Law, in which it said
> No man shall look upon my face and live."

But the Rabbi resolved to enter Paradise alive, and so when the Angel of Death came to take away his soul, he insisted on a boon—to be shown first his seat in Paradise. The Angel consented, but the Rabbi said that he wished to hold the angel's sword as a guarantee that the angel would keep his word. After arriving at Paradise and being shown his seat, he refuses to go back to earth and to return the sword to the angel. At last with the permission of God

the Rabbi remains in Paradise alive and the sword is returned to the Angel of Death on the condition that he should not show himself to mortals to terrify them before their death.

15. In the same series of tales, the poet speaks of Torquemada, the arch-fiend of the Spanish Inquisition, who tortured and burnt on the Spanish auto de fes hosts of Spanish Maranoes or Secret Jews and who was responsible for the expulsion of 300,000 Jews on Tish b'av day, 1492. The Theologian tells of an old Spanish hidalgo who denounced his daughters as heretics to Torquemada. The Inquisitor advised him that he must sacrifice his daughters on the altar of the church even as Abraham was willing to offer up his son Isaac at Moriah; and the cruel priest and fanatic father both attend to the burning of the Spanish girls upon the Auto de fe.

16. The Spanish Jew also tells a little tale about King Solomon, who entertained the mighty prince, Sing Rajah of Hindustan. The tworulers catch sight of the Angel of Death, and the Hindoo sage begs Solomon to command the wind to carry him back to his native Ind, as he fears that the angel is after him. The angel then smilingly assures Solomon that he had really intended to go to the Ind after the Rajah.

It should perhaps be stated that when Longfellow speaks of the Talmud, he, consciously or unconsciously, has reference to the Midrash, rather than to the Talmud.

THE GOLDEN LEGEND.

17. In the Golden Legend Jews and Jewish thought do not fare well at all. Our poet cannot be reproached for this

fact since the poem is but an adaptation and had been written in the spirit and the style of Christian Mediaevalim. And yet one wonders if it were not within the reach of Longfellow to soften here and there the tone, even as one cannot forgive him wholeheartedly that reference in Hiawatha, which reads:

> "How the Jews, the tribe accursed,
> Mocked him, scorned him, crucified him."

18. The Nativity Play represents a humiliating situation which it is difficult to swallow as a mere pleasantry. It represents a number of scenes from the boyhood days of Jesus. In the Village School, Rabbi ben Israel, with a long beard, sitting on a high stool, with a rod in his hand (allusion to the counsel in the Book of Proverbs—not to spare the rod), tells us that he is learned in the Kabalah and in the Talmud, that "water is all Bible lore but Mishna is strong wine," that always at the Purim Feast he is drunk as any beast till he can see no difference between "Accursed Haman be" and "Blessed be Mordecai." Among his pupils are Judas Iscariot and Jesus. Judas answers successfully questions of Midrashic fancy such as "Why howl dogs at night?",

> "In the Rabbinical Book it saith
> The dogs howl, when with icy breath
> Great Sammael, the Angel of Death
> Takes through the town his flight."

And again

> "What the great voices four may be
> That quite across the world do fare
> And are not heard by men?"

On the other hand, the apparently ignorant "little Jesus, the carpenter's son," is asked: "Canst thou the letters say?" Jesus pronounces the Aleph and would not proceed

without learning the meaning of this letter. The Rabbi swears by St. Peter, and as he attempts to strike the boy, finds that his arms had become paralyzed.

19. The reader may take this buffoonery together with the notion of the Rabbi swearing by St. Peter, who historically was as yet unknown, for what it is worth, but even such a presentation may rouse the mob to anti-Jewish prejudices. There is naturally a reference to the crucifixion, as Jesus announces:

> "I at Jerusalem shall die
> By Jewish hands exalted high
> On the accursed tree"

There is some trouble with a Jewish king (historically a tetrarch, a descendant of Herod). The only historical fact in the entire situation is the crucifixion of Jesus and again by the Romans and not by the Jews. There are incidentally interesting references to the "strong wine of Canaan" and of "Hesbon" and to the Book of Records in which the good and ill deeds are inscribed.

20. A relief is offered in another phase of the Play in the form of a silly and yet witty little satire of early Biblical characters: the tidings of the coming of Jesus, according to Lucifer (Satan) were not to be borne by "Old Father Adam,"

> "As being the author of all our woes,
> Abel came next, but petitioned in vain.
> Noah too was refused lest his weakness for wine
> Should delay him at every tavern sign."

We also have another version concerning Adam which reads,

> "But he was refused for fear said they
> He would stop to eat apples on the way."

21. One of the motifs, if not the motif of the work, is the idea of the Book of Records of the good and evil deeds which is taken care of by two angels, in which good and ill deeds are inscribed, and Prince Henry, whom we may well call the hero of the Golden Legend, meets his end with the words:

"It is the end!
With closed book
To God do I ascend."

We casually recognize this thought in our Jewish Newyears and Atonement Day Prayer Book.

LONGFELLOW AND THE JEWS.

22. Longfellow was also interested in the life of the Jews in this country. He visited the Jewish cemetery at Newport and he penned on that occasion some very fine lines that expressed his sympathetic appreciation of Jewish loyalty, of Jewish suffering and of Jewish achievement. He shows an intimate knowledge of the Jewish customs and ceremonies. On the tombstones he reads Portugeese Jewish names

"Of foreign accent, and of different climes;
Alvares and Riveras interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times."

Apparently the community at Newport was passing a crisis, for

"Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,
No Psalms of David now the silence break.
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake."

23. Longfellow makes the pardonable error in representing the Rabbi as reading from the Decalogue rather than from the Scriptures. He knew that the Hebrew alphabet

"spelling it backward like a Hebrew book" and it is a very striking thought of his to compare this fact to the Jewish race gazing backwards, to its Past for its inspiration. It is also interesting that he terms the persecuted Jew, Mordecai, which he, naturally, borrows from the Book of Esther. He speaks with a reverence of the epitaphs on the tombstones written "in the grand dialect the Prophets spake."

24. He seems to understand that the Jews have come to these shores in quest of a haven from persecution and religious bigotry, for he exclaims:

"How came they here?
What burst of Christian hate,
What persecution merciless and blind
Drove over the sea—that desert desolate—
These Ishmaels and Hagars of mankind?

He recalls of "How they lived in the narrow streets and lanes obscure Ghetto and Judenstrass" and the entire bitter career of our people in the dark Middle Ages, and he also speaks of Israel's hope for the future, referring to our prayer for the Messiah,

"And all the great traditions of the Past
They saw reflected in the coming time."

But it is at this point that the great American poet no longer understands the eternal hope of the Jewish people. He concludes with the sentiment:

"And the dead nations never rise again."

25. The Jewish nation is arising once more in our time in wondrous rejuvenation. Alas! that Longfellow, who loved our people so well and who gloried so much in Israel's past, was unable to see the living Israel of the present and the future, and was to pass away before he could see with his own eyes the burst of the new life which was to place the Jews unmistakably in the world of the living nations.

Yet this particular poem has the merit of shedding some little light upon the history of the Jews in America aside from its other interesting features.

JUDAS MACCABEUS (A Chanukah Play).

26. Longfellow, who wrote that charming Indian epic, "Hiawatha," the tale of primitive virtue and high courage, also sympathized deeply with the illustrious Maccabean heroes. He has written the finest Chanuka play we have. Its title is "Judas Maccabeus," a play in five acts. It breathes throughout the spirit of heroism, of national fervour and of religious devotion. The most pathetic story of the martyr-mother and her seven sons, the martial spirit of the national heroes, the great and holy cause for which the Jews fought, are pictured in rich coloring, in beauty of expression and with a deep and true appreciation of the tremendous importance of that stirring chapter in Jewish history. Jew and Gentile alike must be moved and thrilled by this recital of faith in God, even unto death.

27. A few more detailed observations are in place. The play is an historical drama and is based on the story of the Maccabean revolt as narrated in the Apocryphal books of the Maccabees. It is almost a paraphrase in verse of the Apocryphic account except that it is modernized and dramatized. A brief resume follows: Act 1.—King Antiochus in a citadel at Jerusalem discusses with Jason, the apostate high priest, his programme for hellenizing Judaea. He then receives a deputation of semi-Jewish Samaritans of Schechem who deny their Jewish identity and offer to dedicate their Temple on Mt. Gerizim to a Hellenic deity. Jason tells the king that he must expect the Jews to remain more

steadfast to their religion, and also tells him of the martyrdom of the old priest Eliezer, who refused to eat swine's flesh, and of the Maccabaean revolt.

28. Act 2 deals with the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons. (Mahala in Longfellow but Hannah in Jewish tradition). In the first scene we see the mother in her anguish as she hears the voices coming from within the chamber of torture, the brave words of her six sons who are led to death for their staunch loyalty to their people and to their faith. In the second scene is revealed to us the end of the tragedy, as Antiochus vainly bids the mother to influence her last and youngest child, Sirion, to act the traitor.

29. Act 3 takes us into the camp of Judas on the eve of the battle of Beth Horon. The Jewish leader receives reports from Jerusalem and scornfully rejects overtures of peace from the Greek general, Nikanor, who visits the camp in the guise of a herald. Judas encourages his men for the ensuing battle by relating to them his dream of the night before in which the former high priest, Onias, prayed for the cause and the Prophet Jeremiah presented him with a sword of gold.

Act 4. The cause of the Jews has triumphed. The Rededication of the Temple at Jerusalem is celebrated and Judas proclaims the Feast of Chanuka. The apostate Jason, witnessing the event, repents of his perfidy and his life is spared by Judas. He becomes an exile.

Act 5. Antiochus, the frenzied tyrant, on his death-bed, a fugitive among the cliffs of Ecbatana, too repents of his evil designs against the Jews and acknowledges the omnipotence of God.

LONGFELLOW AND THE APOCRYPHA.

30. As already suggested, the sketch is practically a perephrase in verse of the Maccabaean story as recounted in the somewhat conflicting versions given in the two Books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha. Longfellow has selected from the material at his disposal only such incidents which appealed to his artistic sense as integral in the construction of his plot. Thus he fails to mention the activities of either Mattathias, the father, and the brothers of Judas, and also the important episode at Modin, which precipitated the revolt. In whatever Apocryphal data he does use, he follows almost slavishly the accounts. Where the two books vary he selects at will from either or from both.

31. Just what did he take from the Books of the Maccabees? The following episodes have been adapted bodily:

The report of the martyrdom of Eleazer, The martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons, The story of the martyrdom of the 1,000 in the cave, The dream of Judas, The dedication of the Temple, The end of Antiochus. Where he departs from the faithful perephrase, the poet frequently blunders and displays a lack of familiarity with Jewish custom and tradition. Thus he speaks of the Feast of Tabernacles (a mistranslation found even in the Apocryphal account) and therefore of 'palm branches' on Chanuka; and again 'of the torn and trampled volumes of the Law' (the scroll of the Law), or when he introduces the erroneous Hebrew phrase 'Be-Elohim Yehovah' (cf. Abrahams, Bypaths in Jewish Literature).

It should also be noted that the traditional Jewish name for the martyr mother is Hannah and not Mahala, and the name Sirion, for the youngest son, is surely more Greek

than Judaean. The Apocryphal accounts mention no names for the members of the martyred family nor the number of the martyrs in the cave as 1,000. Kislev, not Caslon, is the proper name of the month in the Jewish Calendar.

32. In other respects the poet's departure from the traditional accounts and even his sins against history may be relegated to the realm of a poet's license, and it is possible that these serve to enhance and enrichen the dramatic value of the work. The visit of Nikanor in person to Judas' 'camp is an original incident,' such is also the episode of the Samaritan embassy; and both are helpful in delineating the characters of the heroes and of picturing the state of the times. Original touches are also the interviews between Jason and Antiochus, and Jason and Judas. Historically, Nikanor encountered Judas twice on the field of battle, and was slain at the second battle, which took place at Bethhoron, some time after and not before the Rededication of the Temple, as we understand from Longfellow. But these historic inaccuracies are not intrinsic in the logical rather than the chronological development of the plot.

33. What is far more important for our purpose is to seek the answer to the following queries: Does Longfellow reveal to us the spirit of the Maccabees? Does he offer us an intelligent discussion of the true meaning of the far-reaching struggle? Does he succeed in creating the local colour, the desired atmosphere? To all these queries, the answer is unreservedly—yes. He does create the atmosphere of exultation of the spirit, of an ever-conscious sense of the final and certain triumph of the righteous cause. The air is charged with a high solemnity, with a burning religious zeal, with the glow of a consuming patriotism. The poet is himself saturated with the spirit and the style of

the Apocrypha and with the high purpose of his heroic theme and rewrites these with a rare skill and with an undiminished vigor and freshness.

THE INFLUENCE OF BIBLICAL LORE.

34. But indeed the spirit that dominates this work is not a spirit borrowed alone from the Apocrypha. It is in a truer sense the Biblical spirit unto which the poet had delved many a time and oft before and which inspires him again. We meet expressions, not at all conspicuous in the Apocrypha, such as 'the bloody house, the help of God, Sabbaths and festivals, the wrath of God, the battles of the Lord, Captain of the hosts of God, etc. There is a reference to the story of the prophet Elijah who had withheld rain for three years from sinful Israel and when sought out by King Ahab, 'saw a little cloud rise from the sea like a man's hand and predicted a rainstorm' (An entirely irrelevant allusion to the story in I Kings).

35. In fact, there are citations galore:

"The new Greek leaven
Works slowly in this Israelitish dough." (Antiochus Act 1, Sc. 1).

"But the Creator,
Who made the world, and made the heavens above us,
Who formed the generations of mankind,
And found out the beginning of all things,
He gave you breath and life"

"To suffer for thy sake, and for thy law
And for the many sins of Israel"

"As Moses in his song of old declared
He in his servants shall be comforted"

Adaiah, a Hebrew name, is correctly translated by the poet as "Witness of God."

"That takest in hand
To strive against the God of Israel"

"for his wrath
Shall overtake thee and thy bloody house."

The mother who had gladly listened to the above protestations of her sons of their trust in God, now fears for her youngest, Sirion.

"Doth he fall away
In the last hour from God"

36. The martyred mother prays and laments:

"I cannot watch o'er you as Rispah watched
In sackcloth o'er the seven sons of Saul,
Till water drop upon you out of heaven
And wash this blood away. I cannot mourn
As she, the daughter of Aiah, mourned the dead,
From the beginning of the barley harvest
Until the autumn rains, and suffered not
The birds of air to rest on them by day,
Nor the wild beasts by night."

She calls on Sirion to be brave and to have faith in God and to resign himself to the will of Heaven:

"Look on the heavens above thee
And on the earth and all that is therein;
Consider that God made them out of things
That were not"

Sirion challenges Antiochus, "be not lifted up," he will obey,

"But the commandment of the ancient Law,
That was by Moses given unto our fathers"

He threatens Antiochus for lifting

"Thy hand against the servants of the Lord" (Sc. 2).

The fugitives from Jerusalem bring sad tidings,

"Nor can we keep our Sabbaths or our Feasts"
"All the land
Is full of lamentation and of mourning
The princes and the Elders weep and wail
The young men and the maidens are made feeble,
The beauty of the women had been changed." (Act 3, Sc. 2).

Words culled out from the Book of Lamentations. (Act 3, Sc. 2).

"The heart cry of a people toward the heavens
Stir me to wrath and vengeance"

"We sweep away his altars and his gods" (Act 4, Sc. 1).

Jason, the apostate views the rededication of the Sanctuary and how they "light the lamps

"In the great candlestick. They spread the veils,
And set the loaves of shewbroad on the table,
The incense burns; the well remembered odor"

a description of some of the priestly ritual commanded in the Bible. (Act 4, Sc. 3) cf. Numbers.

37. Again there is a commendable allusion to the deliverance wrought by Jehovah for the sake of "Ezekias, king of Israel,

"And in the armies of Sennacherib
Didst slay a hundred fourscore and five thousand"

and we have too incidents bearing on the career of Joshua. In sooth, what with references and allusions to Moses, Joshua, Elizah, Jeremiah, Hezekias, Onias, the Samaritan relations to the Jews and to Alexander the Great, and now with this history of the Maccabaean revolt, Longfellow presents in this drama a good bit of Jewish Biblical and post Biblical history.

38. The what may be termed spiritual influence of Joshua upon Judas Maccabeus is an entirely original conception with Longfellow and a very pleasing and strikingly effective thought. The poet has Judas conceive of himself as a second Joshua. It is quite logical that such a thought should lodge itself in our warrior's mind,—since his camp is pitched and since he is to fight the decisive battle on the same spot in which Joshua had fought the decisive battle of his days in a cause not really different in purpose. There is a further resemblance in the two men, since both were primarily military leaders, and national not tribal leaders, both uncrowned and untitled patriots. Thoughts of Joshua's signal victory bring to Judas hope of another triumph by his own efforts, by himself, "who is likewise a captain of the hosts of the Lord," and is fighting the battles of Jehovah." The days of miracles were, however, a thing of the past and even as Judas prays, he wonders if he might expect the direst intervention of Heaven, as had occurred in Joshua's times. So he soliloquies:

> "But I am not Joshua, I cannot say
> 'Sun stand thou still in Gibeon, and thou Moon in Ajalon.'

as the rising sun strikes on his banner and brings back the incident to his mind. He then meditates upon the several episodes bound up with the campaigns of Joshua,

> "a slave brought up in the brick fields of Egypt,"

overcame the Amorites, the incidents of the hail storms, the slaying of the five kings of the Confederacy, etc.

39. While Longfellow does not necessarily seek to make out a complete case of identification of the two heroes, there is but little room for doubting a considerable resemblance in their natures, and the poet's efforts in this direction are not only in place but are from all points of view praiseworthy

and successful. This comparison, this reaction of one great spirit on the mind of the other kindred spirit, adds clarity and distinctiveness, it enrichens our mental image of the two.

THE HEROES OF CHANUKA.

40. How does Longfellow draw his characters? He seems to follow in intention at least in the footsteps of Shakespeare. His purpose is to single out the few outstanding individuals in bold and striking relief. This probably accounts for his ignoring Mattathias and others who figured prominently in the struggle. Judas, the Jewish military leader of the revolt, Antiochus, the foreign tyrant, Jason, the Jewish apostate-official, and Nikanor the Greek soldier. These are meant to stand out both as individuals and as types. Thus Antiochus is drawn as a characteristic tyrant of all times and climes, and at the same time reveals certain distinct personal traits which both history and tradition have associated with him. He is not alone the wicked tyrant, but he is also Epimanes, the madman, and Epiphanes, the Illustrious, and he longs for the physical delights of Antioch, his native city. But Longfellow credits him with understanding the subtle nature of the fickle Samaritans and with a familiar knowledge of the history of Greek and Jewish relations. Again the poet follows Jewish tradition in having Antiochus personally supervise the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons (contrary to history and to logic), and on the other hand, he softens appreciably the death scene, in departing somewhat from the manner in which it is described in the Second Book of the Maccabees. He presents a fickle, nervous, egotistic personality, a petty and somewhat mentally deranged tyrant, in colors borrowed from both tradition and his own imagination, to suit the demands of the drama.

41. Nikanor, the general, is pictured in the Apocryphal accounts as a wicked and cruel blasphemer, but our poet affords us quite a different character sketch of the man. He is brave to dare a visit to Judas' camp, he talks in polished and courteous accents, and as one who would prevent unnecessary bloodshed. He blasphemes, true, but not with malice, and he meets his fate like a soldier on the field of battle. The intention of the poet in this delineation is not clear, unless we are to accept the following as his motive; he wished to show that the Greek soldier, as a class in attacking Judaea and in visiting the people with torture and oppression was still not intrinsically wicked and was not to be held accountable for the bloody campaign, since he was but the disciplined tool of the fickle and cruel king.

42. What of Judas Maccabeus? He is described in the Apocrypha as follows: "In his acts he was like a lion of a relentless spirit" and he "fought with cheerfulness" (meaning courage). He is spoken of as a man of religious zeal, of devotion to his land, people, and faith, as a leader and as a statesman. In all these points, Longfellow follows faithfully the Scriptural estimate. He is made to exclaim by our poet, on hearing reports of misery and of laments,

> "And are there none to die for Israel?
> 'Tis not enough to mourn. Breastplate and harness
> Are better things than sackcloth. Let the women
> Lament for Israel: the men should die"

His motto is—"Who is like to thee O Lord among the Gods"?

He is courageous and self-confident and withal modest and unassuming in his self-estimation,

> "I am not Joshua, I cannot say
> 'Sun, stand thou still'.....

but he is prepared to risk all and to cast his burden upon the Lord,

> "Nor am I one who wastes
> The fateful time in useless lamentation;
> But one who bears his life upon his hand
> To lose it or to save it, as may best
> Serve the designs of Him who giveth life."

He has little use for the Greek's smooth courtesy, but out of a sense of innate chivalry, he passes Nikanor on a safe conduit, but drives him out when the latter blasphemes. He completely ignores the wily Greek's ingratiating compliments. He is uncompromising in his cause and rejects Nikanor's overtures with a contempt born of his resolve to plant 'the banners upon the walls of our Jerusalem' or to die in the attempt.

He follows other Biblical generals in causing the head of the slain Nikanor to be hung on the wall of Jerusalem in public view. The portrayal of Judas, while in truth presented in rich and true colouring, in a glow of admiration and worship, is yet perhaps too complex and too varied to be faultless. Still the crowning feature in the nature of the hero our poet succeeded to bring out forcibly and clearly as well as his deeply stirred and his zealously glowing devotion to his nation and his unfaltering and perfect trust in God.

43. The character of Jason, the apostate high-priest, is drawn well. His words and his actions speak loud and clear for him. We meet him at the very beginning the tool of the tyrant, pliant and submissive, fawning and placating, and we can well understand his attitude when we hear Antiochus say, "O Jason, my high-priest. For I have made thee so, and thou art mine." He owed his post to the tyrant and was not the rightful hereditary candidate for the office.

And yet he understands the spirit of his more courageous fellow Jews as he admonishes Antiochus who finds his task of Hellenizing the Samaritans an easy one,

> "My Lord; these are Samaritans. The tribe of Judah
> Is of a different type"

even though a moment later he seeks to allay any suspicion of sympathy with or pride in the courage of his fellow Jews by speaking of them in far less complimentary terms, "I know the stubborn nature of the Jew." (Act 1, Scene 3).

He does not gainsay, he does not argue—but somehow he imparts us the feeling that he has misgivings of the outcome of the struggle. We meet Jason again in his contact with Judas Maccabeus, after the Syrian cause had been lost and he is placed at the mercy of the Jews. He had been found

> "lurking among the ruins of the Temple,
> Deep in its inner courts, we found this man
> Clad as High-Priest."

44. Judas naturally sees in him a traitor and as doomed to a traitor's death. Jason, however, finds it expedient to regard himself as a prisoner of war, a member of an opposing party and pleads for justice on those grounds; and then for mercy seeking to extenuate his crimes by the excuse of coercion on the part of Antiochus. Judas at this point makes a splendi danalysis of Jason's role:

> "True but thou hast been the weapon
> With which he struck; but hast been such a weapon
> So flexible, so fitted to his hand,
> It tempted him to strike."

We learn now of his ferocious nature and cruelty, as Judas knows him:

"Thou art stained
With every crime 'gainst which the Decalogue
Thunders with all its thunder"

"When hast thou
At any time to any man or woman
Or even to any little child, shown mercy"

46. Evidently, he is now to play his last card and seeks to make his terms with the now triumphant Maccabaean party—for he still speaks of Antiochus as a potential victor, and when asked by Judas why he had not followed his master, he answers, "I was left for service in the Temple." When charged with cowardice, he admits the charge and pleads, the apparently truthful cause of his sinfulness,

"The weakness of my nature that hath made me
Subservient to the will of other men."

And at last he is meted out by Judas a punishment in consonance with the theory of poetic justice:

"I will spare thy life. To punish thee the longer
Thou shalt wander
Among strange nations. Thou that hast cast out
So many from their native land, shalt perish
In a strange land. Thou that hast left so many
Unburied, shalt have none to mourn for thee,
Nor any solemn funerals at all
Nor sepulchre of thy fathers."

47. And at last we hear his own spirit and his own mind speak out, still as selfishly as ever, in self pity and chagrin, as he views the procession of priests and patriots at the celebration of the Rededication:

"I should be with them, should be one of them,
But in an evil hour, an hour of weakness,
That cometh unto all, I fell away
From the old faith and did not clutch the new."

Alas today I would give everything
To see a friend's face, to hear a voice
That had the slightest tone of comfort in it."

His conscience does not speak out, he finds no joy in the triumph of the cause of his own people, he merely resents that he had chosen, in a moment of weakness, the losing cause and that he must now pay the penalty for his error, and he still plans to return to Antiochus and to try to recuperate his fortune.

48. Longfellow has grasped intimately the meaning of the struggle, the spirit of the parties, and the historic background of the situation. We are led to realize that Jason stood not alone as the single traitor of his day, but rather as the typical representative and the head of the entire Hellenistic party in Judaea, and when he says in his soliloquy:

"I fell away
From the old faith, and did not clutch the new,
Only an outward semblance of belief. I cannot make mine own
Not being born to it. It hath no root
Within me. I am neither Jew nor Greek
But stand between them both a renegade
To each in turn, having no longer faith
In Gods or men."

he lays bare the soul of each and every traitor of all time, but especially the spirit of the Hellenistic party in Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION

49. Our poet has commingled the religious and the patriotic elements in the spirit that dominated the Maccabaean party:

"The victory of a battle standeth not
In the multitudes but in the strength
From Heaven above the Lord forbid that it
Should do this thing and flee away from them,
Nay, if our hour become then let us die
Let us not stain our honor."

50. The Sabbath question was indeed a problem Judas had to face, since the Greeks were cognizant of the Jewish reluctance to fight on that day, and manouvered to stage warfare on it—with the purpose of gaining a military advantage. Historically, it was Mattahthias, the father of Judas, who had solved the problem by the decision to wage only defensive warfare on the Sabbath.

51. Quite interesting is the poet's understanding of the relations between the Jews and the Samaritans . (Act 1, Scene 2). The Samaritan ambassadors pretend to being "Sidonians, a colony of Medes and Persians," and Antiochus springs the secret of their designs upon them in very true words:

"When the Jews suffer ye are Medes and Persians,
When the Jews prosper ye claim kindred with them.

This statement characterized most truly—even though in the play it is an entirely irrelevant ironic touch—the history of the Samaritan-Jewish relationship. In our own time the Samaritans are protesting their friendship for the successful Jewish settlers in Judaea.

In our own time some of the Palestinian natives claim descent from the ancient Hittites, from the Canaanites, the Philistines, basing their claim to Palestine on the basis of such descent...That type of people, that manner of claim, that sort of life-problem is a recurrent one and is brought out by Longfellow with force and with emphasis.

52. On the whole, the play, while confessedly not the life-work of a genius, is in many respects a masterpiece; its diction is rich and pleasing; its spirit rings true, the characters are well portrayed; the problem is presented clearly and sympathetically; it possesses spiritual power and literary beauty and ethical worth in generous measure. It unquestionably ranks as the very finest, most intimate, and most powerful dramatic treatment of that stirring and far-reaching struggle in the history of the advancement of human progress in the life-struggle of the Jewish nation and of Judaism.

CHAPTER IV.

Whittier—The American Bible Poet.

1. John Greenleaf Whittier was one of America's revered poets. He is often called The Quaker Poet, for he was a Quaker by persuasion and he was filled with the spirit of the Scriptures, the spirit of peace, of worship and of solemnity. His heart went out in sympathy to all humanity. He drank deeply from his most cherished source, the Hebrew Bible. The Biblical spirit breathes throughout his poetic works in abundance and in intensity, he makes use of Biblical lore, Scripture story, Jewish fable, thought and hope. His language is almost Biblical throughout. It may well be said that were it not for the Bible, Whittier would not have produced his works.

2. If any poet may press the claim for the title, Whittier surely is the "Bible Poet." An incomplete study of his poetic works yields about two score poems which contain definite Biblical allusions and of these fully a dozen may appropriately be named Bible Poems. Upwards of two hundred direct Biblical references have been noted in an almost casual study by the writer. Thirty-two Holy places, two dozen Bible characters, at least a score of Biblical events are called up by the poet. Kings and prophets, priests and generals—a splendid galaxy splendidly portrayed.

3. He thinks of his friend, Thomas Chalkley, as

> "like Abraham resting in shade
> Of Mamre's lonely palms."

And to John Pierpont, the poet, he pays the tribute, he

"bore to my ears the airs of Palestine
And girded for the constant strife
Like Nehemiah, fighting with wrong while he wrought
The broken walls of Zion, ever thy song
Hath a rude, martial tune, a blow in every thought."

Of another friend, he sings,

"'Tis said that in the Holy Land
The angels of the place have blessed
The Pilgrim's bed of desert sand
Like Jacob's stone of rest."

Even so had his friend's smile cheered him in his life's career. Even the pumpkin in the Thanksgiving pumpkin pie reminds him of the gourd "which o'er Nineveh's prophet once grew."

4. In "The Angels of Buena Vista" we meet expressions; as

"Like a ploughshare in the fallow," "a bitter curse upon them,"
"To soothe the living and bind the wounds," "Eden flowers,"
"white winged angels hover."

In "The Barefoot Boy,"

"like a regal tent
Cloudy ribbed, the sunset bent
Purple curtained, fringed with gold"

shows the literary influence of the Song of Songs.

In "Marguerite,"

"She murmured a Psalm of the Bible"
"She is joined to her idols, like Ephraim
"the threshold of heaven."

"What of the Day" sounds a prophetic warning,

"Behold the burden of the Prophet's vision

Day of the Lord, of darkness and not light
"Let thy will be done," "Armageddon," "Michael and his angels."

In "Mogg Megone" we meet the Biblical expressions,

"softly as Shiloh's flowing water," "guilty in the sight of the Lord," "Death to the Babylonian dogs."

In the "Pastoral Letter,"

"With Miriam's voice, and Judith's hand
And Deborah's song for triumph given"

in "The Relic,"

"Even as the Prophet's rod of old
In beauty blossoming."

In "Our Countrymen in Chains,"

"What. God's own image bought and sold
Down let the shrine of Moloch sink
No longer let its idol drain
His daily cup of blood."

In "Texas" we have an interesting comparison of the Negro to Issachar, one of the sons of Jacob, whom his father describes in the Bible, as bearing the burden of his brothers:

"What though Issachar be strong
Ye may load his back with wrong
Overmuch and overlong."

5. In "To a Christian" he appeals to his friend who is preparing for the ministry: "Set your feet on Mamres," and to let him hear "Thy Sinai thunders rolled."

To the woman who had been branded as a fugitive slave, he addresses himself as to a martyr, in "The Branded Hand":

"Thou for the true Schechinah, the present home of God,"

and she is a victim "to the solemn priests of Moloch."

And again we have an invocation in the solemn spirit of the Bible:

"But ye who own that higher law
Whose tables in the heart are set,
Speak out in words of power and awe
That God is living yet;
Breathe forth once more those tunes sublime
Which thrilled the burthened prophet's lyre
And in a dark and evil time
Smote down on Israel's fast of crime
And gift of blood, a rain of fire."

6. In "The Human Sacrifice," Whittier protests against capital punishment. He describes the agony of a murderer awaiting his execution, attempting to pray and dying in despair, and the poet evidently appeals for abolition of the death sentence:

"Cast not the clouded gem away,
Quench not the dim but living ray—
My brother man, Beware!
With that deep voice which from the skies
Forbade the Patriarch's sacrifice,
God's angel cries, Forbear."

This last is clearly an allusion to the imminent sacrifice of Isaac which the angel stopped in the nick of time.

"Daniel Wheeler," a song of lament, shows Biblical influence,

"Who knoweth not that with thee fell
A great man in our Israel?"
Fallen while thy loins were girded still,
Thy feet with Zion's dew still wet."

In "The Slaves of Martinique," we have a direct allusion to the Song of Songs. The slave girl is described thus:

"Dark but comely, like the maiden in the ancient Jewish song."

The following thought shows intense and delicate feeling:

"Can ye know the deeper meaning of a love in slavery nursed
Lost flower of a lost Eden, blooming in that Soil accursed.

"Thy ministry and fervent prayer—
Grateful as Eshcol's clustered vine
To Israel in a weary land."

"And though the ways of Zion mourn
When her strong ones are called away,

Yet he who slumbereth not nor sleepeth
His ancient watch around us keeping"

and our poet has faith,

"And Zion's broken walls restore."

7. We also have some Chrstological allusions which, however, contain terms such as "the rose plant of Jericho" and "Lebanon" in "To Ronge," we have an admonition,

"Thrust not his Eden promise from our sphere."

In "Democracy,"

"He stooped to heal the wounded Jew
The worshipper of Gerizim"

and allusions to "the blue lake of Galilee" and to "Tabor's lonely mountainside."

In "Lines," we have allusions to Samaria, to "the vines and olives of the Holy Land" and to "the shrieking curses of the hunted Jew." There is an allusion, which is not intelligible to the author, in the same poem:

"Why cite that law with which the bigot Jew
Rebuked the Pagan's mercy?"

In "The Prisoner for Debt" he violently attacks the law:

"No longer dare as crime to brand
The chastening of the Almighty's hand."

8. Whittier not only speaks in Biblical language and not alone mentions Biblical names, places, thoughts and facts by the score, but he has also written quite a few poems on Biblical and Jewish subjects. He loved Palestine and he sang beautifully and sweetly of the land, of its natural beauties, its historic and sacred spots, and its glorious memories; yet he also recalled in his poems that Palestine is sacred to the Christian heart. We hear of "the dew of Hermon's holy hill" at least a dozen times and almost as frequently of the Jordan and of Tabor, Gallilee and Lake Chinnereth and other mounts and hills and dales and rivers and valleys and lakes and cities of the Bible-lands. In his poem, entitled "The Holy Land," he speaks with regret that he had not seen it with his own eyes, and he tries to visualize it beautifully in stanzas such as these:

> "Nor have I from thy hallowed tide,
> O Jordan, heard the low lament
> Like that sad veil along thy side,
> Which Israel's mournful prophet sent.
> Nor trilled within that grotto lone,
> Where deep in night the Bard of Kings,
> Felt hands of fire direct his own
> And sweeps for God the conscious string."

In this stanza the American poet speaks of the silvery Jordan, of the lamentations of the Prophet, Jeremiah, as he was led into Egypt with the Jewish captives, at the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonia, and also of the little Talmudic tale that King David would rise up at midnight and sing and play the Psalms on his stringed lyre.

9. He begins the song "Palestine" with an outburst of love and reverence,

"Blest land of Judaea! thrice hallowed of song,
Where the holiest of memories pilgrim-like throng
In the shade of thy palms, by the shores of thy sea,
On the hills of thy beauty, my heart is with thee."

He continues to point out with a glowing vividness the many memorable spots in Palestine.

"Thy waters, Genesaret, chime on my ear"
Beyond are Bethulia's mountains of green"
"The gleam of thy waters, O dark Galilee"
"Thy river, O Kishon is sweeping along;
Where the Cannaanite strove with Jehovah in vain,
And thy torrent grew dark with the blood of the slain."

There down from the mountains stern Zebulon came,
And Naphtali's stag, with his eyeballs of flame,
And the chariots of Jabin rolled harmlessly on,
For the arm of the Lord was Abinoam's son.

"There sleep the still rocks and the caverns which rang
To the song which the beautiful prophetess sang,
When the princes of Issachar stood by her side,
And the shout of a host in its triumph replied

"Lo, Bethlehem's hillside before me is seen"
"There rested the shepherds of Judah"
"And throned on her hills sits Jerusalem yet,
With but dust on her forehead, and chains on her feet"

10. One can easily visualize the poet pointing his finger at these spots from some eminence with a running commentary of remarks and reveries to some fellow pilgrims in the Holy Land.

In these and in other poems the poet has also occasion to recall those Biblical places as Hermon, Askelon, the Mount of Olives, Kishon, Lebanon, Jerusalem, Bethulia, Chebar,

the Jordan, Sinai, Gallilee, Samaria, Horeb, Gomorrah, Hebron, Beth Horon, the valley of Eshtaol, Zorah, Mt. Tabor, Mamre, Sodom, the neighbor lands of Babylonia, and Syria, Ammon, Chaldea, Canaan, Egypt, Tyre, Edom and Philistia, so that, with the numerous descriptions that often accompany the allusions, we have here a geographical survey of the Holy Land by Whittier. Yet, for truth's sake, it should be clearly brought out that Whittier is interested in Palestine and its topography only as the Christian feels for the Holy Bible Land. The thought of Palestine as the Jewish homeland at no time enters his mind. To him it is the land of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, the land of the Crusades, the heritage and the Promised Land of the Christian world.

THE PROPHET OF ABOLITION.

11. Whittier, the Puritan, fed up as he is with the Bible, almost proclaims himself an Old Testament prophet risen anew. He hurls his thunderbolts at oppression and immorality in the good old-fashioned Old Testament way, as he not always rightly interprets that spirit. In "The Cities of the Plain" he invokes the wrath of God upon "the proud sons of Sodom feasting." In "Pinetree," we find the lines:

> "Must we kiss the feet of Moloch,
> Pass our children through the flame?
> And let a scornful people
> Once more thy Sinai's thunders rolled."

In "The Call of the Christian," he explains the call of prophecy, as it comes to man in modern times:

> "Not always as the whirlwind rush
> On Horeb's mount of fear
> Not always as the burning bush
> To Midian's shepherd seer
> Nor as the awful voice which came to
> Israel's prophet bards."

12. But it is as the Prophet of Abolition that he hurls his most terrible weapons. He fearlessly denounces slaveholding, calling it, "The Moloch of Slavery," and invokes the vengeance of "God's right arm of power."

"Woe to the House of Rimmon," he exclaims in his "Voice of Freedom." "Down let the shrines of Moloch sink"—who exacts his daily cup of human blood."

Especially is he embittered against the Southern clergy who supported slavery:

> "Just God!—and these are they
> Who minister at thine altar, God of Right
> Men who their hands with prayer and blessings lay
> On Israel's Ark of Light."

Again, in "The Response," he breaks forth against Governor Porter and the pro-slavery clergy in 1838,

> "In concert with the Belial brood
> The Balaam of the Brotherhood."

He likens the activity of societies of the clergy to the Biblical episode in which the King of Moab sought the good offices of the priest prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites.

He speaks with touching sadness of the Negro girls forcably torn away to the slave market and,

> "Of mothers in their childless homes
> Like Rachel, sorrowing o'er the lost."

13. Reflections on the World Convention for the abolition of Slavery moved him to burst out in the sterner and awe-inspiring mood of the ancient prophet:

> "Warning and dread appeal shall come
> Like those which Israel heard from him
> The Prophet of the Chrubim
> Or those which sad Elias hurled
> Against a sin-accused world."

As fearful in the despot's hall
As the pomp of Babylon
The firesign on the palace wall."
"With characters inscribed thereon

The Prophet of the Cherubim is Isaiah and Elias stands for Elijah. And he bids the South behold the warning:

Thus recalling the fall of Babylon of which the seer Daniel warned.

And towards the end we at last have the hope of the coming of Emancipation:

"In thy time OLord of hosts
Stretch abroad that hand to save
Which of old on Egypt's coasts
Smote apart the Red Seas wave."

And he relents his attitude to the South,

"And from that rich and sunny land
The song of grateful millions rise
Like that of Israel's ransomed band
Beneath Arabia's skies."

Thus it shall indeed become a haven "for the Schechinah, the present home of God."

WHITTIER'S BIBLE POEMS.

14. Whittier has dressed some of his finest thoughts and noblest sentiments in the garb of so-to-be-termed Bible poems in that they are centered about familiar Bible characters and wrapped in Biblical atmosphere.

In Ezekiel, the priest-prophet, among the exiles at Chevar in Babylonia, dreams of his Jerusalem days:

"The ritual of my fathers kept
The water for the trench I drew
The firstling of the flock I slew
.....at the altar's side."

Then the burden of the prophecy's power falls upon him and he sees visions of the future, the downfall of Egypt, Tyre and Edom:

"And woe to me; the wild lament
From Zion's desolation sent.
I saw them drawing their stormy hem
Of battle round Jerusalem
And listening heard the Hebrew wail
Blend with the victor—tramp of Baal."

The prophet despairs,

"Our wasted shrines. Who weep for them
Who mourneth for Jerusalem?"

But our poet, worldwise understands that the prophet of all time must say on his say in the face of indifference and hardheartedness.

15. The tidings that the British government had abolished slavery in Egypt at once recalls to him that the Israelites had once been slaves in Egypt and had struck the first blow against the institution of slavery. He celebrated this event in human freedom in a poem which he appropriately called, "The New Exodus," and he expressed therein the noble thought that in our times God works no longer through the might of miracles but through the human heart:

"No longer through the Red Sea, as of old,
The Bondmen walk dry-shod,
Through human hearts, by love of him controlled
Runs now that path of God."

16. Nature and its beauties had a true charm for him. Even as he gazes at the fruit-laden branches in his garden, he thinks of the Biblical stories he had learnt in his boyhood and retells some of these in a sweet little poem which he so charmingly names "The Fruit Gift."

"Last night, just as the tints of autumn's sky
Of sunset faded from our streams and hills
I sat vague listening, lapped into twilight dreams,
To the leaf's rustle and to the cricket's cry.
Then, like the basket flushed with summer fruit,
Dropped by the angels at the prophet's foot,
Came, unannounced a gift of clustered sweetness."

He thus dreams on, of how the ravens, messengers from heaven,would drop down food for the Prophet Elijah, and imagines that the fruit which had fallen into his own lap must have come from Paradise, and his thoughts hark back to the "escol" of grapes which the Jewish spies brought from Canaan to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai

17. Interesting in "Ezekiel" are also the priest prophets' complaints that the demands of holiness are neglected by his contemporaries:

"The princes of our ancient line
Lie drunken with Assyrian wind;
The priests around thy altar speak
The false word which their hearers seek;
And hymns which Chaldea's wanton maids
Have sung in Dura's idol-shades,
Are with the Levites' chant ascending,
With Zion's holiest anthems blending."

And towards the end he has a different plaint, to the effect that the exiles are becoming too easily reconciled to their exiled condition and are singing on foreign soil Zion's songs, in a careless mood:

"Yet ever at the hour I feel
My lips in prophecy unseal
Prince, priest and Levite, gather near
And Salem's daughters haste to hear
On Chebar's water and alien shore,
The harp of Judah swept once more.

They listen as in Babel's throng
The Chaldeans to the dancer's song
Or wild sabbeca's nightly play,
As careless and as vain as they."

18. "The wife of Manoah to Her Husband" is a powerful poem with self-sacrifice for an ideal, such as patriotism, as its theme. The scene is pictured "where Zorah on its rocky height stands" "down Estaol's vales of ripened grains" the mother watches her little son, Sampson playing, and some foreboding of ill comes to her,

"For ever in his large calm eyes
I read a tale of sacrifice,"

and she goes on dreaming aloud of the incidents of his future career,

"Before me, in a vision, rose
The hosts of Israel's scornful foes,—"

as the Philistines capture the Ark from the ungodly sons of Eli, (cf. Judges)

"I heard their boast and bitter words,
Their mockery of the Hebrew's Lord,
I saw their hands His Ark assail.
Their feet profane His holy veil."

The last phrase is an exaggeration or rather an imagination. Then she beholds her son as the Champion of Israel:

"But in their midst, in power and awe,
Like God's waked wrath, our child I saw"

we have a description of the giant and of his reputed mass of hair,

"A child no more—harsh browed and strong,
He towered a giant in the throng,
And down his shoulders, broad and bare,
Swept the black terror of his hair,"

and then a description of his prowess, and of victory,

"So sank the foes of Israel."

We now behold the scene of his death,

"Again I looked. In sunlight shone
The towers and dome of Askelon.
Priest, warrior, slave, a mighty crowd
Within her idol temple bowed.
"Yet one knelt not; stark, gaunt, and blind,
His arms the massive pillars twined.
An eyeless captive, strong with hate,
He stood there like an evil fate."

"The red shrines smoked—the trumpets pealed—
He stooped—the giant columns reeked—
Reeled tower and fane, sank arch and wall,
And the thick dust cloud closed o'er all."

then we hear, "the shriek, the crash, the groan, of the fallen pride of Askelon." But through this all, the mother, hears an Angel's voice bidding her to take comfort,

"Rejoice o'er Israel's broken chain,
Gray mother of the mighty slain."

"To him shall Zorah's daughters raise
Through coming years their hymns of praise,
And gray old men, at evening tell
Of all he wrought for Israel,"

and the old mother bows her head in submission,

"With me, as with my only son,
Oh God, I said, Thy will be done."

The poem indeed offers comfort and heartens the spirit of many a mother whose son has given up his life on the altar of his country.

20. "The Cities of the Plain" attempts to depict the last hours of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sinful cities that had been visited by the rain of fire and pitch, according to Genesis,

"Get ye up from the wrath of God's terrible day!
Ungirded, unsandled, arise and away!
'Tis the vintage of blood—'tis the fulness of time,
And vengeance shall gather the harvest of crime!
The warning was spoken—the righteous had gone,
And the proud ones of Sodom were feasting alone."

A description of dancing and of mirth and feasting is followed by

"Where the shrines of foul idols were lighted on high
And wantoness tempted the lust of the eye;
Midst rites of obsceneness, strange, loathsome, abhorred,
The blasphemer scoffed at the name of the Lord,"

then we hear the warning cry, the lament and we see the destruction,

"Woe, woe to the worship, and woe to the mirth!
The black sky has opened—there's flame in the air—
The red arm of vengeance is lifted and bare."

"Then the shriek of the dying rose wild where the song
And the low tone of love and been whispered along."

Down, down, on the fallen, the red ruin rained
— ——— ———
———
And the shout and the laughter grew suddenly still.

The last throb of anguish was fearfully given;
The last eye glared forth in its madness on Heaven
The last groan of horror rose wildly and vain,
And death brooded over the pride of the Plain."

21. We have several pictures of early colonial life and of the Biblical sentiment that ever filled their natures.

In "Mog Megone," Ruth, the Missionary's daughter, captive among the Indians, recalls her maiden life in the Puritan village:

"I love to hear
Tales of the pure, the good and the wise
The holy men and maids of old
In the all-sacred pages told
Of Rachel stooped in Haran's fountains
Amid her father's thirsty flock
Of gentle Ruth and her who kept
Her awful vigil on the mountains
By Israel's virgin daughter wept
Of Miriam with her maiden's singing
The song for grateful Israel meet
While every crimson wave was bringing
The spoil of Egypt at her feet."

In "Cassandra" Southarck, the Familist girl who had broken the severe strictures of Puritan belief and had been cast into prison, perhaps with the intent of banishment from the colony, blesses "the God of all sure mercies" after her liberation:

"Yea, He who cooled the furnace around the faithful three
And tamed the Chaldean lions, hath set his handmaid free."

"By the living God," the rough seamen shout, as they take her part against the stern Governor Endicott and the Puritan ministers.

"Like the herdsmen of Tekoa in Israel of old
Shall we see the poor and righteous again for silver sold?"

WHITTIER AND THE RABBIS

22. Whittier knows of the Rabbis, of their wisdom and worth and he has written two poems, entitled "Rabbi Ishmael" and "Two Rabbis." In "Rabbi Ishmael" he shows that he knows of the ancient customs in Temple days for the Jewish high priest to enter the "Holy of Holies" and to pray for all Israel and mankind. Rabbi Ishmael is made to utter a prayer "in the silence of his soul" a prayer unmatched for its charm and simplicity. It runs thus:

"O Thou eternal. I am one of all
And nothing ask that others may not share
Thou art almighty, we are weak and small
And yet thy children; Let thy mercy spare."

This prayer reads as if it had been taken right out of the Day of Atonement prayer book.

23. "The Two Rabbis" is accounted one of his finest efforts. It indeed points "to a sweet and strong truth of the divine life." With touching pathos it tells the story of Rabbi Nathan, who twoscore and ten, walked blameless through the evil world, and then, just as the almond blossomed into his hair, met a temptation all too strong to bear and miserably sinned. So, adding not falsehood to guilt, he left his seat, and taught no more among the elders, but went from the great congregation, girt about with sackcloth and with ashes in his head, making his gray locks greyer. Long he prayed, smiting his breast. Then as the Book he laid open before him, for the Bath Kol's choice, pausing to hear that Daughter of a Voice, behold the royal preacher's words: "A friend loveth at all times, yea unto the end, and for that evil day doth thy brother live". Marvelling, he said, "It is the Lord who gives counsel in need," and he decided to go to his friend, the renowned Rabbi ben Isaac at Ecbatana and to lay his sins before him. As he goes on his way, he repeats David's psalm of penitence, and at last he meets the other Rabbi, who, it appears, had also sinned and was on his way to ask him to pray for him. At last they both forget their own troubles and each prays to God for the forgiveness of the other's sins. It is then that their own sins are forgiven, as the poet tells us so simply and so beautifully:

"Peace for his friend besought, his own became,
His prayers were answered in another's name."

Thus beautifully and graphically has the American poet revealed and couched in a truly appropriate setting the ancient Midrashic thought that "our prayers are answered only when we pray in behalf of others."

24. Whittier has chosen a charming little legend from the Midrash about King Solomon. It tells how:

"Out from Jerusalem
The king rode with his great
War chiefs and lords of state
And Sheba's queen was with them.

"Across an anthill led
The king's path and he heard
Its small folk, and he—their word
He thus interpreted."

"Here comes the king, men greet
As wise, and good and just
To crush us in the dust
Under his heedless feet."

The king orders his suite not to thread upon the anthill, and our poet then draws the moral of this ballad, "King Solomon and the Ants":

"Happy must be the State
Whose ruler heedeth more
The murmurs of the poor
Than flatteries of the great."

25. The Jewish spirit as revealed in the Bible has a tremendous influence on Whittier's works, as we have seen. Even the Midrash has served our poet as one of his creative sources. But the Jewish people as an entity, its hopes and its history, its status and its living problems, hold no interest for our poet. There is not a thought, not a line devoted to that people from whose spirit and from whose

culture he had drawn such abundant nourishment. The only interest he does evince in Israel is of an archaic nature, and the only mention he makes of the Jew is as of the people who functioned by force of fate prominently in the crucifixion. And this event is stated without malice as a purely incidental fact. The only other mention savours again of archaic dust, as he bids, "A Young Clerical Friend."

> "Oh! teach him that the Christian man
> Is holier than the Jewish priest."

Clearly it is not the living Jew but the long past dead and Old Testament priest denounced by the Hebrew prophets that he is concerned with. That he owed a tremendous debt to Jewish influence, Whittier could never grasp, for to him the Bible was the Christian Old Testament which he readily blended with the New Gospel.

CHAPTER V.

Emerson and The Bible.

1. A descendant of the early Puritans, himself a preacher and the scion of preachers, Ralph Waldo Emerson was nevertheless not influenced by the Scriptures to any considerable extent, in his poetic works. He was a thinker, a sober-minded man and possessed a Yankee sense of humor. He elected to study divinity because he inherited from his "sire a formality of manners and speech" and also "a passionate love for the strains of eloquence." He was not fired by any consuming zeal for any cause and it is interesting to note that his first sermon was based on an ignorant laborer's dictum that "men were always praying and all their prayers were answered." But Emerson added: "We must beware, then, what we ask." Thought rather than passion or inspiration was his forte. He, no doubt, assimilated Biblical lore, wisdom and style and occasionally reveals their influence. We thus meet terms such as, myrrh, Adamhood, mortal mixed of middle clay, Ara rat, a votive stone, Nineveh, Paltering Cain, King of Kings, the Most High of the old flood's subsiding slime, Bethlehem, Nile, Gilead, behemoth, my few and evil years (The Last Farewell) (cf. Genesis, xlvii.9), the word of the Lord by night, (Boston Hymn), while Eden and Paradise are ever on the poet's tongue tip.

2. Emerson, the essayist, also steps forth in the role of the philosopher of nature, and in "The Problem," Job-like, he inquires:

"Knowest thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves and feathers from her breast,
Or how the fish outbuilt its shell,
Painting with morn each animal cell?"

A clear Biblical influence is contained in the following,

"The word unto the Prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken,"

a reference to the episode of Moses breaking the Tablets of the Decalogue, after the construction of the Golden Calf. (Exodus) "Uriel" is Hebrew in name only, except that it contains the expressions, serpahs, cherub, and the angel's veiling wings (cf. Isaiah vi.4). In "Worship" a few lines recall the incident of Daniel, the prophet in the den of lions:

"Thrown to lions for their meat
The crouching lion kist his feet" (cf. Daniel vi.18).

"The Rhodora" treasures a beautiful sermon-thought. The little flower "on being asked whence" it came, gives answer

"The self-same Power that brought me there brought you."

In "Wood-Notes II"

"Quoth the pine-tree:
Who of me
Tells the pedigree?
Only the mountains old
Only the waters cold
Only moon and stars
My coevals are.
Ere the first fowl sung
My relenting boughs among
Ere Adam wived
Ere Adam lived."

Only a poet who has read the story of creation in the Bible could have written these lines.

3. "May Day" is a beautiful poem and contains some noble sentiments. We read:

> "And so perchance, in Adam's race
> Of Eden's bower some dream like trace
> Survived the flight and swam the flood
> And wakes the wish in youngest blood
> To tread the forfeit Paradise."

And again we read,

> "As poured the flood of the ancient sea
> Spilling over mountain chains."

His chief theme appears to be:

> "For thou O spring, canst renovate
> All that High God did first create."

It is characteristic of Emerson that he wrote the following lines in "Threnody":

> "I taught my heart beyond the reach
> Of ritual, Bible or of speech."

4. Emerson and Holmes alone of all America's great poets acknowledge the fact that Jesus, the Christian prophet came of Jewish stock, and Emerson calls him, in a peculiar fashion, "Boy-Rabbi Israel's Paragon." He does not hesitate to liken Shakespeare to Jesus in "Shakespeare",

> "Unmeasured still my Shakespeare sits
> Lone as the blessed Jew."

even though Dr. Lowell refused to publish his "Song of Nature" because of a like comparison as it might be interpreted as a mark of irreverence. The upshoot and end of his philosophic poetry, his spiritual optimism, appears to resemble the conclusion reached by Ecclesiastes.

> "Revere the Maker," for the Lord
> "Apples of Eden ripe tomorrow
> Plants with tears of ancient sorrow."

5. Ralph Waldo Emerson, prophet of the Concord Idealistic school, in his own words, "knows of Holy Book the spells," but subjects himself to their influence altogether too deliberately, too critically, so calmly and without allowing his spirit to be swept away by its power and passion, the richness of its lore and the fulness of its wisdom.

CHAPTER VI.

Lowell and The Bible.

1. James Russell Lowell was one of America's gifted poets. He also enjoyed a distinction as a diplomat, having served as Minister to Spain and also to the Court of St. James. He was reputed as the prime literary editor of his day, owing to his connection with the Atlantic Monthly and with the North American Review, and was Longfellow's successor at Harvard. The son of a clergyman, a native of Cambridge and trained in the Harvard cultural atmosphere, the New England poet early conceived a reverence for and a deep knowledge of the Bible. He knew it from cover to cover and he also profited by its lore and its style in large and rich measure. We may justly attribute his sincerity of utterance and the masculine strength of his verse to the direct and all absorbing influence of the Scriptural style.

2. In glancing over the pages of Lowell, the reader easily becomes convinced of the rich yield Biblical lore and style have afforded our poet. There is barely a poem which is altogether free from that influence. Thus we meet expressions such as 'old as Methusalem,' 'there is the idea of fall and temptation,' 'look with Levite eye,' 'gate of Paradise,' we learn to gaze.

Undazzled on the kindness of God's face"

and about 'rear again Zion's crumbled walls' 'He hides His face from them in wrath' 'No Levite pride.' In his Sonnets we have "Deem it not Sodom fruit of vanity' and 'weariness

of the soul' 'Birthright' 'God is with us.' The heroine in Sonnet XII is addressed as

"O patient, Ruth-like, mild
And spotless hands of earnest womanhood."

In Sonnet XVI there is a beautiful thought in which he compares noble thoughts that brighten up man's life to the angel visitors of Abraham who brought happiness into the patriarch's life by announcing the glad tidings of the promise of the birth of a son:

"With great thoughts worthy of the high behests,
Our souls are filled, those bright ones with us be
As in the patriarch's tent, his angel guests"

3. In 'A Legend of Brittany,' the heroine

"Though tempted much, her woman's nature clings
To its first pure belief, and with sad eyes
Looks backward o'er the gate of Paradise."

and it is good to read of

"Ruth some sisterly, sweet nature"

and of the hope that

"and Edens ope her gates to Adam's seed."

In 'Irene' we have the expression of a reverent love for a good woman. The poet cherishes toward her a feeling,

"As when I read in God's own holy book"

and he describes her virtues,

"The garden of her soul still keepeth she
An Eden where the snake did never enter."

His poem, entitled 'The Church,' expresses the thought of the Psalmist of the glory of God filling all the earth-in

"For his is not the builded church."

In 'A Chippewa Legend' the starving Indian

"Made bold by hunger, he was fain to glean
(More sick at heart than Ruth, and all alone)
After the harvest of the merciless wolf,
Grim Boaz....."

But for truth's sake it should be pointed out that this simile is neither apt, nor beautiful and not at all relevant.

LOWELL'S BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY.

4. Lowell, who was of a philosophic turn of mind, seeks to solve the riddle of man's mission in life and conceives himself the prophet of today. In 'A Parable' he seeks at 'the holy hill' the presence of God, he pleads with 'the guide of my fathers' in an humble heart to 'grant thy servant but a sign':

> "No loud burst of thunder followed
> Not a murmur stirred the air"

but sees God and perceives His message in the flower, in nature, in the heart of creation,

> "Hard of heart and blind was I
> I looked for signs and wonders"

Clearly this poem had been suggested by the thought of the revelations at Sinai and Horeb. An expression such as 'hard of heart' and 'blind was I' should be traced to Isaiah, Chapter 6, and the entire thought to the prophets and Rabbis.

5. Again the philosopher seeks to answer life's problems. In 'To the future' he likens his own efforts to gaze into the future to Moses catching a glimpse of Canaan:

> "Land of Promise from what Pisgah's heights
> Can I behold thy stretch of peaceful bowers!"

The 'Present Crisis' was conceived in the soul of a strong man and we well believe that

> "When a deed is done for Freedom
> Runs a thrill of joy prophetic"

The Northern Kingdom of Israel had been called upon to choose between Jehovah and the Baal at Mt. Carmel; even so the poet feels in the crisis of pro and con slavery agitation:

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side,"

and he calls out:

"Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?"

6. Lowell also introduces the problem that had troubled theologians of all ages—the seeming prosperity of evil, and he discusses it in the spirit reminiscent of the Books of Job and of Ecclesiastes:

"Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis
Truth alone is strong," is the conclusion arrived at
"Since the first man stood God conquered with his face to Heaven upturned
.....behind that dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

7. An interesting reference is to be found in 'The Courtin' in an episode of Puritan life, as the girl thinks of her lover in the church choir:

"My! when he made Ole Hundred ring
She knowed the Lord was nigher."

8. 'Abraham Lincoln' is a manly tribute to the memory of 'the first American.' The description is certainly conceived in a Biblical spirit and just those elements that the Bible would demand in the leader of men are stressed even in this tribute. Lincoln was not physically prepossessing—but the people—"They knew that outward grace is dust" and he was "One whose meek flock the people joyed to be." He was a hero, a leader of the people,

"Wise, steadfast in the strength of God and true,
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed
Who loved his charge but never loved to lead."

It is not difficult to conjure the vision of a Joshua, David,

Moses or King Saul or any of those splendid shepherd leaders of olden Bible days, old Lincolns of Scripture fame.

9. In New Year's Eve, 1844, the poet reflects on man's restless faculties: 'That wander Ishmael like the desert fare' and gazing on the 'starry sky' muses:

"How our own erring will it is that hangs
The flaming sword o'er Eden's unclosed gate
Which gives free entrance to the pure in heart."

LOWELL'S SERMON POEMS.

10. Lowell, a clergyman's son, wrapt in Harvard's clerical atmosphere, naturally falls into preaching and so we have for our delectation quite a few sermon poems:

The splendid trust in Heaven which characterizes the simple pious folk is given wonderful expression in 'An Episode at the Fire at Hamburg.' Thus Old Herman in the tower of Old St. Nicholas trusted that

"For surely God, a pathway would unfold
Through this red sea, for faithful hearts, as once he did of old."

Even as the flames surround him and the tower is about to crash he calls out:

"Sing now and make your voices heard in hymns of praise, cried he,
As did the Israelites of old, safe walking through the sea."

Lowell was the president of the American branch of the Society for International Copyright and his denunciation of plagiarism could not have been made more tellingly than in the following two lines:

"The Ten Commandments will not budge
And stealing will continue stealing."

11. One fine morning, when out walking, our poet plucked some flowers. Immediately he penned a little poem which he named 'Flowers.' The flowers, life flowers spoke

out to him—memories and messengers, flowers of Paradise, and they admonish him:

"And thou canst make this life a Hell
Or Jacob's ladder up to Heaven
.....To open thy heart to every blessed influence
That from the heart of nature springs."

'Love's Altar' is reminiscently Biblical in its style and in its basic thought. The moral is the theme that offering, sacrifice is acceptable alone when dictated by unselfishness. No wonder the poet recalls at this occasion the episode of the sacrifice offered by Cain:

"Yet when I made my offering then
Like Cain's the incense would not rise!
A selfish shrine."

The description of the altar at once calls up well familiar lines in the Song of Songs:

"I built an altar in my soul
'Twas garlanded with fairest thought
And crowned with fancy's flowers bright
With choicest gems 'twas all inwrought
Of truth and feeling."

Compare:

"King Solomon made himself a palanquin

The top thereof of gold
The seat of it of purple
The inside thereof being inlaid with love"

12. In 'The Vision of Sir Launfall' we come across but one direct Biblical allusion in the following lines:

"Daily with souls that cringe and plot
We Sinais climb and know it not."

The spirit of the poem is more correctly to be traced to the New Testament influence.

13. Of the treasure troves of ancient Jewish culture Lowell seems to have no intimation. We miss them altogether in his poetic works. Even Zion, the Holy Land, holds no lure for him, even though here and there we meet a Biblical spot such as Hermon or Pisgah or Sinai. With the Jews as a people, with their history, their land and their culture as such, and even with the Bible as the product of the Jewish spiritual genius, he is not at all concerned. The Bible serves him as an inspiration for his philosophic and moral thoughts and ideals, as a rich source of appropriate sacred lore and as a repository of apt phrases and expressions. It is significant that foremost abolitionist though he was, so very unlike his associate, Whittier, he finds so little support, so little material, so little inspiration for his cause in the Bible. The following conclusion may be reached at: Faith, deep religious feeling, contemplation of nature and the reflection on the why and the wherefore of man's life form the predominating notes sounded by Lowell and those have their true and deep-set origin in the spirit and the letter of our Bible.

CHAPTER VII.

Dr. Holmes on The Bible, Jews and Judaism.

1. Dr. Holmes, a physician by profession, a professor at Harvard, a social lion and a Yankee humorist, perhaps did not have any too much reverence for the Bible, but he made voluminous use of its language and of its lore. He was a radical Unitarian and belonged to the fashionable Emersonian radical set, but could not very well be set down as an idealist. He, apparently, was pleased with himself, his own comfort, and his place in society too well, he had too much self-appreciation of his own wit and cleverness to take any cause quite seriously, and he did write some very fine and very clever verses but all on the surface.

SCRIPTURAL LORE

2. His poems are filled with Biblical allusions, with Scriptural lore, with turns and phrases from the Holy Writ, even though in his 'Wind Clouds and Star Drifts' he attacked Biblical theology. In his 'Dedication,' entitled To My Readers.

> "Can all the varied phrases tell
> That Babel's wandering children speak"

In 'The Pilgrim's Vision'

> "Still shall the fiery pillar's ray
> Along thy pathway shine,
> To light the chosen tribe that sought
> This western Palestine."

In 'A Modern Request'

> "old Noah's shoots,
> How Shem's proud children reared the Assyrian piles
> While Ham's were scattered through the Sandwich Isles."

"Her lap some precious learning caught
Like Ruth's and the grain."

3. In 'A Rhymed Lesson' we read:

"Or is our being's only end and aim
To add new glories to our Maker's name"
Now as in Eden where his first-born trod

"Remember One, a judge of righteous men
Swore to spare Sodom, if she held but ten

"When man's first incense rose above the plain
Of earth's two altars one was built by Cain."

"Six days at drudgery's heavy wheel she stands
The seventh sweet morning she folds her weary hands.
Yes, child of suffering, thou mayst well be sure
He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor."
"That gain their author the Philistine's name.
(A stubborn race that spurning foreign law
Was much belabored with the ass's jaw)

an allusion to Sampson's exploit in Judges

'The Two Armies'

"The bloodless stabber calls by night
Each answers, 'Here am I.'"

'Our Limitations'

"When Sinai's summit was Jehovah's throne,
The chosen Prophet knew his voice alone."

'The New Eden'

"When man provoked his mortal doom
And Eden trembled as he fell"

"That saw the young Euphrates gleam

That Gihon's circling waters nursed"

"Yet in our Ishmael's thirst we knew
The mercy of the Sovereign hand.
Would pour the fountain's quickening dew
To feed some harvest of the land."

"No flaming swords of wrath surround
Our second Garden of the Blest."

"God keep the tempter from its gate"

in all, an interesting comparison of the Pilgrims as opening up in America, the new Garden of Eden.

'The Old Man of the Sea'

"Oh, the dreadful Old Man of the Sea
He's come back like the Wandering Jew."

'International Ode'

"Till Thou shalt reign alone
Great King of kings."

4. 'Choose Ye This Da yWhom Ye Will Serve,' written in 1863, shows some feeling on the question of slavery. The first part of the so-called prayer is placed on the lips of the slave holders, The Lords of The Lash,

"O Lord, we are shaped in the image of Thee
Smite down the base villains that claim to be free
And lend Thy strong arm to the soft-handed race
Who eat NOT their bread in the sweat of their face."
Thus pleads the proud planter."

There is scorn and irony aplenty in the above lines. Now the second part of the poem reads:

"Hear the Puritan's prayer:
O Lord, that didst smother mankind in thy flood

If Ammon and Moab must reign in the land

Thou gavest thine Israel fresh from thy hand
Call Baal and Ashtoroth out of their graves
To be the new gods for the empire of slaves!

Whose God will ye serve, O ye rukers of men
Will ye build you new shrines in the slavebreeder's den,

Or bar with the children of light, as they call
On the Judge of the Earth and the Father of all."

5. 'Sherman's In Savannah' is an interesting Pilgrim Campaign song during the Civil War that shows a direct Biblical influence:

"Like the tribes of Israel
Fed on quails and manna
Sherman and his glorious band
Journeyed through the rebel land
Fed from Heaven's all-bounteous hand
Marching on Savannah."
"Glory be to God on high
Shout the loud Hosana"

and the final shout, "Canaan's shore is won at last."

6. A song for his class meeting has a reference to

Judas drank of Jordan's river
Herod and Herodias and daughter," etc.

7. In The Twilight is a clever reflection on the verse in Ecclesiastes to the effect that there is nothing new under the sun. Dr. Holmes disputes the statement by bringing forward some modern inventions of which Solomon had not even dreamt:

"What next we ask? and is it true
That sunshine falls on nothing new
As Israel's king declared?

Did Tarshish telegraph Tyre?
How Hiram would have stared!
And what if Sheba's curious queen

Who came to see,—and be seen—
Or something new to seek,
And swooned, as ladies sometimes do

At sights that thrilled her through and through,
Had heard, as she was coming to,

A locomotive shriek,
And seen a rushing railway train
As she looked out along the plain
From David's lofty tower?

Are these old tricks, King Solomon
We living moderns claim?
If both those mothers at your bar
The cruel and the mild,
The young and tender, old and tough
Had said, "Divide—you're right though rough,"
Did old Judaea know enough
To etherize the child?"

8. 'Album Verses,'

"When Eve had led her lord away
And Cain had killed his brother."

'Hymn of Trust,'

"Thou art near
On Thee we fling our burdening woe."

'In Wind Clouds and Star Drifts,' Part II Regrets,

"With them who have looked from Shinar's clay built towers"

an allusion to the Tower of Babel in Genesis, Chapter VI.

'Rhymes of the Hour,'

"As Grandpa Noah loved the old
Red sandstone march of Jubal's day"

'Bunker Hill Monument'

"The Lord in heaven confound them, rain his fire and brimstone round them"

'Two Sonnets' (Harvard) is an attack on the established church,

"Like David's altar on Moriah's rock
Who stand like Joshua's army."

Mindful that Israel's altar stood of old
Where echoed once Araunah's threshing floor."

'The School Boy,' expressions such as 'battle for the Lord' and 'held the hours as Joshua stayed the sun.'

> "They love to dally with the wire
> As Isaac played with Esau's hair."

'Hymn, the Word of Promise,'

> "Lord, Thou hast led us as of old
> Thine Arm led forth the chosen Race
> Through Foes that raged, through Floods that rolled
> To Canaan's far-off dwelling place."
>
> "So from the rock that Moses smote
> The fountain of the desert sprung."

9. In writing his patriotic hymn, 'God Save the Flag,' his inspiration is Biblical, and thus we meet expressions like, 'burning with star firs, but never consuming,' reminiscent of the burning bush.

> "Borne on the deluge of old usurpations,
> Drifted our Ark o'er the desolate seas,
> Bearing the rainbow of hope to the nations"

10. Thus we have met Biblical lore and allusions, both relevant and irrelevant by the score, and instances of Biblical influence by the hundred, we have references to Creation, to the Garden of Eden, to the Expulsion, to the murder of Abel by his brother, to Mizraim, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to Esau, to the various races mentioned in the Bible, to Moses, to Joshua, to Ruth and Boaz, to Sampson, to the prophet Elizah, to David and Solomon, to Herod and Herodias, to the Jewish struggle with Rome, reference to the several spots, rivers, mounts, valleys in the Bible lands, to the various forms of idolatry in vogue in those days, references to the Rabbis, to Jewish life and suffering and false charges in the Middle Ages and to present day prejudices. Considerable of Dr. Holmes' poetry is concerned with Jews, with Jewish life, with Jewish men, and with the

Jewish Book, and withal Doctor Holmes does not, possibly, in spite of himself, entertain a reverence towards the Bible and a feeling of respect and cordiality to the People of the Bible.

DR. HOLMES' SCRIPTURAL MEMORIAL TRIBUTES.

11. Dr. Holmes was frequently called on to write so-called social verse and among these also verses of tribute on various occasions of individual and historic events. Invariably the poet turned to the Scriptures for continued and unceasing inspiration. His Memorial Verses for the services in memory of Abraham Lincoln breathe the solemn spirit of the Scriptures:

> "O Thou of soul and sense and breath
> The everpresent Giver,
> Unto thee might angel Death,
> All flesh thou dost deliver.
> What most we cherish, we resign,
> For life and death alike are thine,
> Who reignest Lord forever."

and similar Hebraic sentiments and expressions as, "Sanctify the Nation, Be Thou Thy orphaned Israel's friend," and "Bless Thy name forever."

12. In the hymn, 'At the Funeral Services of Charles Sumner,' the poet finds a ready prop in Bible lore:

> "A nation mourns its dead.
> Its sorrowing voices one,
> As Israel's monarch bowed his head
> And cried, 'My son, my son.'"

and he concludes:

> "O mourning land, lift up thine eyes
> God reigneth. All is well."

lines reminiscent of 'The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' (Job).

A Memorial Tribute' (Dr. Samuel G. Howe),

"Leader of armies, Israel's God
Thy soldier's fight is won;
No voice is heard from Sinai's steep
Our wandering feet to guide
From Horeb's rock no waters leap,
No Jordan's waves divide;
No prophet cleaves our western sky
On wheels of whirling fire.

Yet here as to the patriarch's tent
God's angel comes a guest
He comes on Heaven's high errand sent
In earth's poor raiment drest."

13. To Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, our poet plays a glowing tribute in a poem entitled 'The World's Homage."

"If every tongue that speaks her praise
From every land and tribe, would beat
The polyglots at Babel"
Briton and Frenchman, Swede and Dane,

The Russian serf, the Polish Jew,
Arab, Armenian, and Mantchoo,
Would shout, "We know the Lady."

"Who knows not Uncle Tom

Has never heard of Moses"

and he insists on her role in bringing about the fall of slavery, that it was due to her influence and writings that

"Moloch sunk to Hades."

14. In 'A Welcome to Dr. Benjamin Arthorp Gould' the astronomer, he "their Baal disenthroned,"

"All cluster round thee-seers of earliest ages
Persians, Ionians, Mizraim's learned kings,
From the dim days of Shinar's hoary sages."

For 'Shakespeare's Tercentennial'

"For him the Lord of light the curtain rent
That veils the firmament"

and his is the "Prophet's Scroll,"

"Whenever his page the effluent splendors poured
Thine own: Thus saith the Lord."

On occasion of the 'Centennial of Humboldt's Birthday,' he hails this 'Hero of Knowledge'

"He fed no broken altar's dying fire,
Nor skulked and scowled behind a Rabbi's text."

"We claim the flood that fixed our mortal fate—
Bent to our reach the long forbidden tree

The angel frowned at Eden's eastern gate
Its western portal is forever free"

15. The 'Harvard Anniversary' touches a chord of solemnity and of reverence,

"At Israel's altar still we humbly bow,
But where, oh where are Israel's prophets now?"

And in 'The Birthday Tribute':

"Who is the Shepherd sent to lead?
Israelite indeed,
What guileless—
The folded flock may watch and keep?"

DR. HOLMES' ATTITUDE TO THE BIBLE.

16. Dr. Holmes' attitude to the Bible is to be properly estimated from his discussion of Biblical principles and sentiments expressed in his series, 'Wind Clouds and Star-Drifts.' Under the subhead, 'Worship, We Read the Lines,'

"These be thy gods, O Israel. Who is he,
The one ye name and tell us that ye serve,
Whom ye would call me from my lonely tower
To worship with the many-headed throng?

Is it the God that walked in Eden's grove
In the cool hour to seek our guilty sire?
The God who dealt with Abraham as the sons
Of that old patriarch deal with other men?
The jealous God of Moses, one who feels
An image as an insult and is wroth
With him who made it and his child unborn?
The God who plagued his people for the sin
Of their adulterous king, beloved of him,—
The same who offers to a chosen few
The right to praise him in eternal song
While a vast shrieking world of endless woe
Blends its dread chorus with their rapturous hymn?
Is this the God ye mean, or is it he
Who heeds the sparrow's fall, whose loving heart
Is as the pitying father's to his child,
Whose lesson to his children is "Forgive,"
Whose plea for all, "They know not what they do?"

17. Having introduced the reader into the spirit of the work, it is in place to make the following introductory statement: Holmes' 'Wind Cloud and Star Drifts' is a series of reflections on life, on human instincts and on human destiny. It is a reaction against severe Puritanism and even against conservative Unitarianism, a challenge to dogmatic, formal, accepted forms of church religion, of theology. The weakness of the entire discussion lies in the fact that the poet launches his attack against the Old Testament and against the spirit of the Rabbis, neither of which he understands, in any but a superficial fashion. The first intimation of this challenge we have already become acquainted with in the lines culled from Worship, Part VII. We here have a clear and undisguised call to forsake the Old Testament conception of the Deity and to embrace the concept offered by the New Testament. That the poet has consciously and intentionally singled out but a

single surface phase of the Scriptural concept of the jealous Deity is self evident. It is equally clear that the poet has completely ignored the fundamental concept of justice which underlies the surface layer of the Deity's attribute of jealousy and vengeance. Thinking men will refuse to be impressed by such a skin deep argument, by such surface, random shots at Scriptural theology.

18. In part VIII under the heading of Manhood, we have a plea for a manly religion,

"Knowing as we do
"That He who shaped us last of living forms
Has long enough been served by creeping things."

He proclaims his new gospel in the following lines:

"This is the new world's gospel: Be ye men
Try well the legends of the children's time,
Ye are the chosen people, God has led
Your steps across the desert of the deep
As now across the desert of the shore;

Mountains are cleft before you as the sea
Before the wandering tribes of Israel's sons;
Still onwards rolls the thunderous caravan,
Its coming printed on the Western sky,

A cloud by day, by night a pillared flame.
Your prophets are a hundred unto one
Of them of old who cried, "Thus saith the Lord";

They told of cities that shall fall in heaps
But yours of mightier cities that shall arise."

But he now falls into the error of launching a vehement attack on the clergy as a whole who bar the way to the Tree of Knowledge, barely realizing that one cannot expect to honestly condemn all ministers of religion as a class:

"The tree of knowledge in your garden grows
Not single but at every humble door;

Its branches lend you their immortal food,
That fills you with the sense of what you are,
No servants of an altar hewed and carved
From senseless stone by craft of human hands,

Rabbi, or dervish, brahman, bishop, bonze
But masters of the charm with which they work
To keep your hands from the forbidden tree."

19. In the following lines, the poet is willing to be quite lenient with the 'true doctrine of yesterday,' the worship of Moloch, since in our own days we are facing just as monstrous teachings and practices. True it is, that he later on characterizes the worship of Moloch, as 'uncouth horrors of the past.' But this afterthought is not effective as an afterthought cannot very well be effective.

"Ye that have tasted the divinest fruit,
Look on this world of yours with opened eyes!
Ye are as gods. Nay, makers of your gods,—
Each day ye break an image in your shrine
And plant a fairer image where it stood:
Where is the Moloch of your father's creed
Whose fires of torment burned for span long babes?
Fit object for a tender mother's love."
Why not? It was a bargain duly made
For these same infants through the surety's act
Intrusted with their old for earth and heaven.
By Him who chose their Guardian, knowing well
His fitness for the task,—thie, even this,
Was the true doctrine only yesterday."

As an explanation of Moloch service the thought is interesting, but its relationship to the new gospel and to the religion of manhood promulgated by the poet is not at all evident.

20. In Part IX Rights we have a complaint, which the poet utters, Job like, because he feels hurt, and not in the

expectation of receiving an answer. He feels that man has not sufficient rights in the domains of theology and in the management of the universe. The complaint is at first voiced in modest tones, but as he goes on, our poet waxes bolder and bolder and towards the end even holds out a spoiled child's threat, that he won't love God as much as he might if he were treated better. Holmes must have misread or misinterpreted some Rabbinic dicta, some prayers written for a special occasion, some tales from the Midrash and he greedily seizes upon these with all the gusto at his command:

"What am I but the creature Thou hast made?
What have I save the blessing Thou hast lent."

"Who wrought the wondrous charm that leads us on
To sweet perdition, but the selfsame power
That set the fearful engine to destroy

His wretched offspring (as the Rabbis tell),
And hid its yawning jaws and treacherous springs

In such a show of innocent sweet flowers
It lured the sinless angels and they fell."

21. Again, having discovered in the Atonement Day prayer book the poetic thought which likens man to the potter's clay, he launches into a frenzied attack and threatens God, as has been pointed out, to offer Him but an imperfect love:

"If we are only the potter's clay
Made to be fashioned as the artist wills,
And broken into sards if we offend
The eye of him who made us, 'tis well;
Such love as the insensate lump of clay
That spins upon the swift-revolving wheel
Bears to the hand that shapes its growing form
Such love, no more will be our heart's return
To the great master-workman for his care"

And now is voiced the plaint of his rightlessness:

> "He would not trust me with the smallest orb
> That circles through the sky. He would not give
> A meteor to my guidance, etc.....
> And yet, my Rabbi tells me—He has left
>
> Has left that mighty universe, the Soul
> To the weak guidance of our baby hands
> Let the foul fiends have access at their will,
> Taking the shape of angels to our hearts,—
>
> Our hearts already poisoned through and through
> With the fierce virus of ancestral sins;
> If what my Rabbi tells me is the truth
> Why did the choir of angels sing for joy?"

As he comes back to his sense, he consoles himself and his friends, "He will not blame me."

> "Brother, thy heart is troubled at my word;
> Sister, I see the cloud is on thy brow.
> He will not blame me—He who sends not peace,
> But sends a sword, and bids me strike again
> At error's gilded crest."

But what is the error? Does Holmes' new gospel preach that man is not the master of his own soul, that he is not responsible for keeping it pure and saintly while it is in his safe keeping, intrusted to him during his lifetime, as his Rabbi would undoubtedly tell him, if Holmes could only understand him? If so, what becomes of his religion of manhood?

22. His discussion of Idols in Part XI is interesting. He accounts for idol and image worship in the past as the primitive, childish instincts of human nature, and he is confident that such propensities will be condoned by Heaven.

"But what is this?
The sacred beetle, bound upon the breast
Of the blind heathen. Snatch the curious prize.

Ah! Longer than thy creed has blest the world
This toy, thus ravished from thy brother's breast,
Was to the heart of Mizraim, as divine,
As holy, as the symbol that we lay
On the still bosom of our white robed dead."

"An idol? Man was born to worship such!
An idol is an image of his thought;
Sometimes he carves it out of gleaming stone
And sometimes moulds it out of glittering gold."

"Let us be true to our most subtle selves,
We long to have our ideals like the rest.
Think! When the men of Israel have their God
Encamped among them, talking with their chief
Leading them in the pillar of their cloud,
And watching o'er them in the shaft of fire,
They still must have an image; they still longed
For somewhat of substantial, solid form
Whereon to hang their garlands, and to fix
Their wandering thoughts and gain a stronger hold
For their uncertain faith.
Are we less earthly than the chosen race?
Are we more neighbors of the living God?
Than they who gathered manna every morn,
Reaping where none had sown, and heard the voice
Of him who met the Highest in the mount,
And brought them tables graven with His hand?
Yet these must have their idol, brought their gold,
That star-browed Apis might be god again;
Yea, from their ears the women broke the rings
That lent such splendours to the gypsy brown
Of sunburnt cheeks,—what more could woman do
To show her pious zeal? They went astray,
But nature led them as it leads us all."

"We, too, who mock at Israel's golden calf
And scoff at Egypt's sacred scarabee,
Would have our amulets to clasp and kiss,
And flood with rapturous tears, and bear with us
To be our dear companions in the dust;
Such magic works an image in our souls."

23. Part XII, Love, concludes the series of reflections by the poet crowning Love as the redemption of man. What our poet has attempted to accomplish is quite clear but that he has not gone about it properly is just as true. He has set up the New Testament as over against the Old Testament and the Rabbis, in all probability thinking of Puritanism all that time. But our poet has either not made an honest effort to enter into the spirit of Old Testament and of Rabbinic theology or else he is not capable of appreciating them intelligently. He cites here and there a thought, an episode, a homily, a concept from the Bible or from the Rabbis, takes it right out of its context and he uses or abuses it at his will in building up his preconceived theories. He undertakes to preach a new gospel of manhood, and falls into plaints of powerlessness at befalling temptations and ends in the hope of forgiveness for whatever errors he might commit because of God's abundant love. That this line of argument is not consistent nor effective is self-evident, but where the poet sins unjustifiably, is when he misrepresents, either intentionally or through lack of knowledge, the spirit of Scriptural and Rabbinic theology, by parading several isolated, superficially presented sentiments, and permitting us to believe that these stand for the whole, are typical and representative of the whole and require no interpretation, no understanding, no concentrated study. Holmes has given us in this work some interesting and sympathetic views on human nature and on ethics, he has touch-

ed upon several poignant social and ethical and religious problems of his day. But if he has seriously intended to proclaim: "This is the new gospel," and to set up a positive and modern philosophy of religion, he has failed owing to the lack of depth and of breadth of conception, to his lack of research and of critical vision, and to his want of sustaining and unifying thought, as well as to a want of intellectual honesty.

HOLMES AND THE JEWS.

24. Dr. Holmes' attitude to the Jew is given some expression in several of his poems and especially in his 'At the Pantomime' and 'The First Fan.' Undoubtedly, in his lifetime the number of Jews in New England was not large and his personal acquaintance was quite restricted to the peddlar class and to hearsay. His references to the Jewish race do not reveal an intimate relationship with Jewish life, nor an understanding of their problems, such as is shown, for instance, to a limited extent, by Longfellow in his "Judas Maccabeus" or in his "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport."

25. The poet speaks frequently of Israel, of his seers and kings, etc., but it is Israel of the Bible lore, not the Jew of tŏday, who is meant, and the term Israel is, indeed, not infrequently, used as a symbolic name for the Puritan group or for the American people. Yet, Holmes does recall at least once that the modern Jew is the blood-heir of Biblical Israel in 'At the Pantomime,'

> "The peerless blood
> That flows unmingled from the Flood."

26. He presents an interesting scene of Judaean life and customs at the time of Jesus in 'The Mother's Secret,' a perephrase of the Nativity, reminiscent of the treatment of

the same story in Longfellow's Golden Legend. The poet brings us to the vicinity of Bethlehem, and we at once think of Ruth,—

"They passed the fields that gleaning Ruth toiled o'er
They saw afar the ruined threshing floor
Where Moab's daughter, homeless and forlorn
Found Boaz slumbering by his heaps of corn.
And some remembered how the holy scribe,
Skilled in the lore of every jealous tribe,
Traced the warm blood of Jesse's royal son
To that fair alien, bravely wooed and won."

Jesus is depicted as an extraordinary Jewish child and the country folk at Nazareth

"In the meek, studious child they only saw
The future Rabbi learned in Israel's law."

27. The following is interesting, depicting as it does a pilgrimage scene to Jerusalem, a scene that might have been placed in almost any Judaean village:

"And now the feast was near
When at the Holy Place the tribes appear"

the family of Joseph

"They reach the Holy Place, fulfill the days
To solemn feasting given, and grateful praise."

At last they turn homewards and "far Moriah's height melts in the southern sun." On the journey they meet everywhere with cordial, friendly people, "And all the sons of Abraham are friends." And now we have a fervent description of the critical hour in Judaea, then a near-province of Rome.

"Oh weary hour. Oh, aching days that passed
Filled with strange fears each wilder than the last,
The soldier's lance, the fierce centurion's sword,
The crushing wheels that whirl some Roman lord
The midnight crypt that sucks the captive's breath,
The blistering sun of Hinom's vale of death."

At such a time the parents missed the young Jesus and with anxious hearts,

> "they sought once more
> The Temple's porches, searched in vain before;
> They found him seated with the ancient men,
> The grim old rufflers of the tongue and pen
> Their bald heads glistening as they clustered near
> Their gray beards slanting as they turned to hear,
> Lost in half envious wonder and surprise
> That lips so fresh should utter words so wise."

The poet evidently makes full use of his 'license' in picturing the ancient Judaean scholars in such fanciful colours. The rumour of the boy's genius reaches the native little village, and stirs gossip:

> "The tale was told to Nazareth's sober men
> And Nazareth's matrons told it oft again;
> The maids retold it at the mountainside,
> The youthful shepherds doubted or denied;
> It passed around among the listening friends
> With all that fancy adds and fiction lends,
> Till newer marvels dimmed the young renown
> Of Joseph's son who talked the Rabbis down."

28. These scenes are pictured in pleasing touches and with a certain vividness and realism and yet there is nothing distinctively Palestinean about them. To offer a description of this nature, one need not even to have paid close attention to a travelogue lecture on the Holy Land, nor is a knowledge of Jewish history a prerequisite. A familiarity with the Scriptures and with the New Testament and perhaps with the writings of Josephus would be entirely adequate.

29. 'The First Fan' is a fanciful, clever and finely humorous thing, but the so-called Jewish allusions are not

pleasant to retain in one's mind, nor distinctly tasteful. It depicts a crisis in the Olympus:

"When rose the cry 'great Pan is dead'
And Jove's high palace closed its portals
The fallen gods before they fled
Sold out their frippery to a mortal.

To whom? you ask. I ask of you
The answer hardly needs suggestion.
Of course it was the Wandering Jew
How could you put such a question?"

Thus here we have our introduction to the Jewish old clothes peddlar, and next we have the pleasure of hearing him bargain with the deities—

"The scowling queen of heaven unrolled
Before the Jew a threadbare turban
'Three shillings' 'One',"

But Venus had better success in selling him a fan.

"And lo, the Fan! for beauty's hand
The lovely queen of beauty made it
The price she named was hard to stand

But Venus smiled, the Hebrew paid it.
But o'er the world the Wandering Jew
Had borne the Fan's celestial pattern"

And that's Dr. Holmes' humorous explanation of the origin of the fan at a gathering of a New England Ladies' Society. To take offense at this bantering, at this uncalled for parading of the Jew-peddlar would be regarded as a ridiculous thing to do, and yet the modern Jew must be sensitive on such unwelcome notoriety in literature at the expense of his race.

30. 'At the Pantomime' is a serious and definite attempt to overcome gross popular prejudice against the Jewish race, but it is not altogether successful at that.

The poet tells us of the episode, autobiographically:

"Amidst the throng the pageant drew
Were gathered Hebrews not a few.
Blackhanded, swarthy—at their side
Dark, jeweled women, orient eyed.
If scarce a Christian hopes for grace
Who crowds one in his narrow place,
What will the savage victim do
Whose ribs are kneaded by a Jew."

"Next on my left a breathing form
Wedged up against me, close and warm
The break that crowned the blistered face
Betrayed the mould of Abraham's race
That coal black hair that smoke brown hue
Ah cursed, unbelieving Jew!
I started, shuddering to the right,
And squeezed—a second Israelite."

Then the poet proceeds to tell how he becomes enraged, and

"I stabbed in turn with silent oaths
The hook-nosed kite of carrion clothes
The snaky usurer, him that crawls
And cheats beneath the golden balls,
Moses and Levy, all the horde
Spawn of the race that slew its Lord."

He thinks of the charges Chaucer told

Of children caught and crucified;
I heard the ducat sweating thieves
Beneath the Ghetto's slouching eaves
And thrust beyond the tented green
The leper's cry, "Unclean, Unclean."

"In vain my conscience whispered, 'Shame,'
Who but their Maker is to blame?
I thought of Judas and his bribe
And steeled my soul against their tribe."

31. But then he happens to catch sight of a young Jew who recalls the features of Jesus.

"So looked that other child of Shem
The Maiden's boy of Bethlehem,"

and he continues his frank, honest and noble sentiment that grips him now—

"And thou couldst scorn the peerless blood
That flows unmingled from the flood,
Thy scutcheon spotted with the stains
Of Norman thieves and pirate Danes.
The New World's foundling, in thy pride
Scowl on the Hebrew at thy side,
And lo! the very semblance there
The Lord of glory deigned to wear,"

and in conclusion,

"Thy prophets caught the Spirit's flame
From thee the Son of Mary came
With thee the Father deigned to dwell.
Peace be upon thee, Israel."

32. As already suggested, the poem aims to discredit flase charges and gross prejudice against the Jewish race on the part of the ignorant populace. It puts forth the excellent argument that the American race is no better than the Jewish people, and all nations have their unsavoury precedents:

"Thy scutcheon spotted with the stains
Of Norman thieves and pirate Danes."

it suggests the folly of condemning Jewish physiognomy,

"Who but their Maker is to blame"
"The very semblance there
The Lord of Glory deigned to wear."

Arguments such as these must serve to silence the religious bigot and fanatic and the sensible, thinking man as well. Your cultured, professional Antisemite, however, will

find loopholes and will discover weak spots in this defense of the Jew. He will point out that the poet does not deny or disprove the charges of Chaucer and leaves unchallenged the epithet of "ducat sweating thieves" and yet there is no doubt of the poet's good intention and of his success.

33. Of the Rabbis our poet has not a high opinion, perhaps for the reason that he does not enter fully into their spirit and therefore does not understand them. To him Rabbinism means didactics, hair splitting argumentation, petrifying tradition a la Calvinism, and he does not permit an opportunity to pass him without challenging them, their dicta, their point of view:

> "Nor skulked and scowled behind a Rabbi's text"
> (Humboldt's Birthday)

and he vigorously disputes opinions he puts into the mouths of the Rabbis or of My Rabbi on four occasions.

Somehow, too, one cannot overcome the feeling that Dr. Holmes habitually thought of Jews as money grabbers. This alone can really account for still another allusion, in addition to the several already mentioned in 'At the Pantomime:

"or sweated ducats palmed by Jews of yore" (The Exile's Secret).

It is a thought, a conception, which Holmes cannot altogether free himself from, and it floats on the surface here and there in his work. To the vast majority of the Jewish race who are guiltless of this charge, the thought that even in modern literature their race is so unjustly characterized by thinking literary men is to say the least unpleasant and disappointing.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Poets of the South.

EDGAR ALLEN POE.

1. Edgar Allen Poe, a native of Baltimore, is still accounted a New England poet, but by no means displays the characteristics of the New England school. Of actor parents and of a wayward and reckless temperament, he was not subject to Biblical influence and atmosphere, and yet his early training and his literary interest in the Bible have resulted in a stylistic influence. We have also allusions to the Holy Land (To Helen), to Balbec and Gomorrah (Al Aaraf) to the "dew of Hermon," vanities of the East, first born (Politian) "let there be light, seraphic, dew that hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon's hill" (To M. L. S.) Astarte (Ulalume) the winged Seraphs of Heaven (Annabel Lee) reminiscent of Isaiah, Chapter 6.

2. There are three other poems which show more marked Biblical influence: "The City in the Sea" shows stylistic influence:

> "Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
>
> ———— ———— ——
>
> Where the good and the bad
> eternal rest"

and there is an interesting allusion to "Babylon like walls."

In "The Raven" his finest poem we meet expressions such as:

> "Perfumed from an unseen censer, turtledove,
> Seraphim, Aideun, is there balm in Gilead?
> By that heaven that bends above us (cf. Jeremiah VIII.22)

3. In "The Colliseum":

> "O spells more sure than e'er Judaean king
> Taught in the Garden of Geth-semen
> O charm more potent than the rapt Chaldea
> Ever drew down from out the quiet stars."

The first, no doubt, is an allusion to King Solomon famed in Midrashic lore as the lord of Magicians, and the second thought of the Chaldee as magic worker is also borrowed from the frequency of similar references in the Old Testament.

4. As is clearly evident, Poe's poetry and Biblical influence have not a close, an innate, nor a large relationship, and yet it is interesting to realize that even a poet of Poe's temperament should nevertheless be influenced to any extent by the Bible, and not at all in a cynical nor in a polemic spirit which characterizes occasional touches of Bible influence in the works of more "respectable" poets, such as Holmes, for illustration.

SIDNEY LANIER AND THE BIBLE.

5. Sidney Lanier was one of the South's finest poets. In several of his poems he has quite a few Biblical references. They do not reveal a deep nor a considerable knowledge of the Biblical lore and thought, but they do show a certain amount of the influence of Biblical style and a feeling of reverence towards the Scriptures.

In "A Song of the Future" he has an interesting thought garbed in a Biblical symbolism, reminiscent of the Flood and of Noah's Ark:

> "Sail fast, sail fast,
> Ark of my hopes, Ark of my dreams,
> Sweep lordly o'er the drowned Past"

6. In "The Symphony" he launches an attack on trade and also incidentally an unjustified and uncalled for attack on the Jewish race. He asks:

> "Man shall not live by bread alone. (Deut.)
> Hath God said so?
> But Trade saith, No";

and again

> "Later the sweet voice
> Love thy neighbor—said"
> .....
> Vainly the Jew might wag his covenant head
> 'All men are neighbors' so the sweet voice said"

It is difficult to see why the covenant Jew should wag his head at this Old Testament injunction.

7. In "My Spring" we are called upon to love Magdalen and Ruth. In "In Absence" the poet feels that a lover should not offer to his lady love "the incense that for God is meet."

We also have an interesting comparison of the growth of Johns Hopkins University, the poet's alma mater, to Adam born or created into full fledged manhood, in "Ode to John Hopkins University":

> "So quick she bloomed, she seemed to bloom at birth
> As Eve from Adam, or as he from Earth."

8. In "The Power of Prayer" written in Negro dialect, we have

> "Bless de Lord and praise His Holy name"
> "O Glory Hallelluiya to de Lord det reigns on high"

and an interesting observation:

> "Sence Jacob had dat wrestlin' match, I too gwine do my best
> When Jacob got all underhelt, de Lord answered Yes."

9. "Strange Jokes" is strange indeed to call a joke. We cull lines:

Well: Death is a huge omniverous Toad
.....
Once in a whimsey mood he sat
And talked of life, in proverbs pet,
To Eve in Eden,—"Death, or Life.—
As if he knew
And so he toadied Adam's wife
There in the dew."

10. "A Psalm of the West" is one of Lanier's more ambitious poems and shows a marked Biblical influence in the comparison of America, the Western nation to a new Adam. It was written at the occasion of an anniversary of the admission of the state of California into the Union. The refrain throughout the poem is in the spirit and even almost to the letter of the concluding appellation: "Thou Tall Young Adam of the West." The West is Adam, and Freedom is his Eve :

"Tall Adam of lands new made of the dust of the West
Thou wroughtest alone in the Garden of God unblest
Till He fashioned lithe Freedom to lie for thine Eve on thy breast"

and recalling that Eve brought with her the desire for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which they were forbidden to taste on pain of death, the poet exclaims:

"Let us taste the whole radiant round of it, gaily she said.
If we die, at the worst we shall lie as the first of the dead
Knowledge of Good and of Ill; she hath given thee."

11. Indeed, freedom doth give that knowledge and that choice, that responsibility:

"He wrought his image dead and small,
A nothing fashioned like an all.
Then breathed He softly on the dead:
'Live self,' thou part, yet none of me."
O wonder! now thou sleepest in pain,
Like as some dream thy soul did grieve.

God wounds thee, heals thee whole again
And calls thee trembling to thine Eve."

This is in truth an interesting reflection on the creation of man and of Eve. And at last there follows a homily as our poet turns preacher, in his observation of the Biblical narration of how God bid Adam to call names to all animals and to rule over them. Our poet interprets the animals which God passed before Adam as beasts, evil beasts in the sense of evil inclinations and wicked attributes and deeds:

"Then all the beasts before thee passed—
Beast War, oppression, Murder, Lust,
False Art, False Faith, slow skulking last
And out of Time's thick-rising dust
Thy Lord said, "Name them, tame them, Son."

It offers a clever text for a sermon and is effectively utilized.

12. Lanier was not a prolific writer nor was he distinguished by his depth of thought and power of conception. Yet the Bible, its lore, its diction, its sentiments, its spirit exerted a considerable influence. He used the Scriptures in a solemn spirit, in a generous measure and with good effect.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

13. In The Vision of Rabbi ben Isaac is told the tale of the Rabbi's dream that his soul in the form of a crimson plume is not admitted into Paradise, because:

"And that the stain of self-righteousness is red
As blood on all of them"

and only after he pleads for salvation, the angel Love and Jesus receive it and as a sign

"at my feet
A snow-white feather fell."

As a theological polemic poem it is interesting, but it certainly is not effective. There is no cause assigned by the poet to account for this sudden dream, and there are teachings galore in Jewish ethical lore to denounce self-righteousness, and in addition there is no reason why the Rabbi should be charged with this particular fault. The poet displays an ignorance of Jewish character, of theology and of Ethics coincidently with a narrowness and intolerance and religious bigotry in claiming for his religion a monopoly of love, of mercy and of purity and of salvation, which may well be claimed by every other religion to a considerable extent and certainly by Judaism, as revealed in the Bible and in the teachings and writings of the Rabbis.

14. In "Dan Paine" there is an interesting comparison of death to Canaan:

> "And when, at last, the hand of Fate
> Shall lift the latch of Canaan's gate,
> And usher me in thy domain"

"Love's As Broad As Long" has some clever lines on Love.

> "Love'll be
> Nigh on hands as punctchully
> As he was the day Eve sot
> Waiting, in the gyrden-spt,
> Fer ole Adam jes' to go
> On ahead and tell her so!"

15. "Brudder Sims" is a poem in dialect and in it we read:

> "W'at's Moses an' de Laws?
> W'at's fo'ty days an' nights ut Noey toss
> Aroun' de Dil'-ooge? Wat dem Chillen et
> De Lo'd rain down? Wa't s'prise ole Joney so
> In dat whale's inna'ds? W'at dat laddh mean
> Ut Jacop see? And w'at dat laddah go?
> Who clim dat laddah? W'at dat laddah lean?

An' wha' dat laddah now? "Dast chalk yo' toe
Wid Faith," sez Brudder Sims, "an' den you know."

Brudder Sims indeed is a mighty fine preacher.

16. The poet apparently thought well of the Bible even though he had not profited to any extent by it. So we have a poem entitled "The Old-Fashioned Bible." He recalls how the people in the church gathered:

"To hear the old Bible my grandfather read
The old-fashioned Bible—
The dust-covered Bible—
The leathern-bound Bible my grandfather ewad"

In "A Hymn of Faith" we have an allusion to the "good old Jorden's stormy banks"

In reference to a song, the poet remarks: "I have known that song since Adam was a child." In the poem, "Told by a Noted Traveller," we have a song in a song, that runs like this:

"Hail, all hail. I'm on my way.
Gideon am
A healin' balm—
I belong to the blood-washed army."

And we also meet with some pious expressions as the traveller recounts some Civil War incidents, and here Biblical influence on the poet ends.

CHAPTER IX.

Eugene Field's Jewish Poetry.

1. Eugene Field is supremely the children's poet. Naturally and with no visible effort he enters into the frolics of children, he prattles in baby talk, he loves the little ones and sings of and to them in their own fashion. While Biblical influence does not dominate his muse, it is nevertheless clear that both the Book and primarily the Psalter and also the Holy Land and the Jewish race, all enter to an extent into the welcoming sphere of his songs and exert some little influence upon the altogether human and cheery strains of the poet.

2. Perhaps the saddest event in the poet's life was the premature loss of his little son. What a depth of despair and of pain we witness in the few sad lines in "The Grandsire":

> **"What could I ay or do but pray**
> **Pray let me be the first to go."**

This is the burthen of his song, while the boy nears death, but towards the conclusion of the poem we hear a note of resignation:

> **"For when I walk the vale of death**
> **Above the wail of Jordan's flow."**
> **"I see**
> **'Twas better he should wait, not I."**

it comes to him

It is not necessary to force a direct Biblical influence in this poem, and yet one may recall like sentiments of despair and of consequent resignation in another father, King David, the Biblical bard, who fasted and prayed at the fatal

sickness of the son Bathsheba hath borne to him, and resigned himself to fate at the child's death:

> "While the child was still living, I fasted and wept, for I thought, who knows but the Lord will have pity on me and the child will live. And now that he is dead.....can I restore him again? I shall go to him, but he shall not come back to me." (2 Samuel x11.22-23).

And again we are reminded of the lamentation for Absalom: "And he wept and thus called he as he walked to and fro: 'My son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would that I had died in your stead, Absalom, my son, my son.' " (2 Samuel xix.1).

3. Field feels himself a child in the presence of God, and as he hears his little child knocking at the door and,

> "Please let me in,—it's only me," in 'At the Door,"

our poet sits thinking of the life to come:

> "And will that heavenly Father heed
> The truant's supplicating cry
> As at the outer door I plead,
> 'Tis I, O Father?"

In 'Hi-Spy' he watches the children play and reflects,

> "Oh, girls are girls, and boys are boys,
> And have been so since Abel's birth."

4. Childlife has no creed or race and Field readily sings the lullabies of all nations, the American, the Norse, the Dutch, and even the Japanese, and also the Jewish. In his 'Jewish Lullaby' we read reminiscently of the psalm, By the Streams of Babylon, and of many a Hebrew poet since—

> "My harp is on the willow tree
> Else would I sing love to thee
> A song of long ago
>
> Perchance the song that Miriam sung
> Ere yet Judaea's heart was wrung
> By centuries of woe."

As the mother looks at her baby we hear of Jewish woes and of hopes:

> "The shadow of the centuries lies
> Deep in thy dark and mournful eyes
> But hush! and close them now;
> And in the dreams that thou shalt dream
> The light of other days shall seem
> To glorify thy brow."

and the concluding lines,

> "But hush and sleep, an dthou shalt hear
> Jehovah's voice that speaks to cheer
> Judaea's fainting soul!"

A Jew must indeed harbour a sense of gratitude to the American poet within whose breast wells such a depth of sympathy and understanding of Jewish woes, and of their yearnings.

5. But Field sings still another lullaby and this time it is 'The Divine Lullaby':

> "I hear thy voice,
> I hear it by the stormy sea,
> And when affrighted, I call to thee
> The Guardian angels come and go,"

and so on and on, sentiments that have their source in the Psalms, in the Book of Job and in sacred lore.

6. We have also 'A Perephrase' of the commonly called Lord's Prayer. It is perhaps more proper to speak of it as a near-paraphrase. But the poet is not very successful in his perephrasing efforts, as is shown in another attempt with the Twenty-Third Psalm. Naturally by this time it is quite well known to the general reader that the Lord's Prayer, Our Father in Heaven, etc., has a Jewish origin.

Field has a number of Biblical phrasial turns in some of his humorous poems. In 'The Bibliomaniac's Prayer' the

booklover pleads in expressions befitting a more earnest cause, expressions like: my flesh is weak, in wisdom's way, banish from my erring heart, in temptation's way, and Satan.

'Gosling Stew' and the poet's enthusiasm for the notorious German stew reminds one of the Jewish 'Gefilte Fish' enthusiasts.

7. In 'Sag Harbor' we have another humorous touch clad in solemn Biblical phrases. In a fishing trip, the Rev. Roe is satisfied to get whatever haul Heaven will send:

> "For He who heeds the raven's cry
> Will care in His good time for me.
> Whether upon the ocean tides
> Or the water brook I go
> I'll take the bait the Lord provides."

We also have several references in 'The Wanderer.' As he finds a seashell on a mountain top, he muses:

> "Or whether there cast when ocean swept the land
> Ere the Eternal had ordered the Day."

And in 'Dibdim's Ghost',

> "From Canaan's beautific coast
> I've come to visit thee."

8. Apparently the poet, enroute to or from Europe, had taken occasion to visit Palestine or else had read in the press of the projected construction of a railroad in that country, and that event led him to reflections, which do not necessarily reveal an intimate acquaintance on his part with the land, its natives and their nature, but do show some knowledge of the Orient, but also an appreciation of the finances involved in railroad construction and also of the effect the introduction of a railroad system in an Oriental land may well have in its early stages. All in all, the lines in 'The Jaffa and Jerusalem Railway' are quite interesting:

"A tortuous double iron track; a station here, a station there,
A locomotive, tender tanks, etc."

and then he goes on,

"This is the Orient's novel pride and Syria's gaudiest modern gem,
The railway scheme that is to ply betwixt Jaffa and Jerusalem."

Merrily the poet sounds his good humoured warning:

"Beware O sacred Movly cow, the engine when you hear its bell,
Beware O Camel, etc."

And now come the financial troubles:

"And when, ah when the bonds fall due, how passing wrath will wax the state
From Nebo's mount to Nazareth will spread the cry—Repudiate.
From Hebron to Tiberias, from Jordan's banks unto the sea."

9. Fortunately our poet was not a prophet as well. His warning not alone missed the mark, as we know it today, but already another railroad line has been set in operation in the land with good prospects of fair success.

CHAPTER X.

Walt Whitman's Poetry.

The Hebraic Spirit.

1. Walt Whitman has a series of poems, entitled "Children of Adam," in which, however, any Scriptural influence practically ends with the use of the title. "The World", the first of the series that goes under the general name of "To the Garden," contains the thought that all sons and daughters of man are beautiful and that he ever finds

"Eve following by my side, or back of me, or in front."

Paradise represents even to Whitman the spot where he finds perfection of happiness and thus he exclaims in "One Hour to Madness and Joy"

"O to return to Paradise!"

2. "Adam" is to Walt, the pioneer type and America the synonym for the new and present day field of man's toil and bliss and he sings in an Autobiographic strain, in his "Ages and Ages",

"I chanter of Adamic songs
Through the new garden, the West."

There is an indirect allusion to the creation of woman as narrated in the bible, In the poem "As Adam". The woman speaks out:

"As Adam early in the morning
Walking forth from the bower, refreshed with sleep
Beheld me where I past."

In all these slight allusions and traces of Biblical influence we are conscious of the suggestions of the universality of manhood, of the simplicity and naturalness of the relations of man and woman, of the freshness and grandeur of nature.

It is that general atmosphere which is of necessity lent to the poet by the sympathetic absorption of the spirit and lore of the early chapters of the Book of Genesis.

3. The poet now unravels his attitude to the Jewish people in relation to his general tolerant and unprejudiced sympathy with man. In "Salut Au Monde" the poet speaks of hearing men of all nations and among them,

> "I hear the Hebrew reading his records and Psalms."
> "You Jew journeying in your old age through every risk, to stand once on Syrian ground!
> You other Jews waiting in all lands for your Messiah!"

There is a fine touch of sympathetic admiration, a salute of fellowship, the glad and cheery hand of comradeship extended to Israel in connection with its national aspirations. En passant we also notice a side reference to 'the ruins of Nineveh, you ascending Mount Ararat.'

4. The poet has no prejudices and no preferences for any or all races. He is a citizen of the world, and in his own words, 'I do not prefer others so very much before you either.' In "Song of the Broad Axe" we are told that it had served all races, and among them also 'served the Hebrew.' In "With Antecedents" he repeats the theme of his tolerant nature.

'I respect Assyria, China, Teutonia, and the Hebrew,' but we have really been led to understand this before. In "A Broadway Pageant" he pays his respect to the 'Hebrews, the Ancient of Ancient.' Certain lines in the "Carols of Words" show marked Scriptural stylistic influence, for instance,

> "The song is to the singer.....
> The teaching is to the teacher....." etc.

5. "A Prayer of Columbus" evidences traces of a confused Biblical influence as indeed our poet confesses:

"Is it the prophet's thought I speak, or am I raving?"

The prophet in question is in all probability Moses who gazes into the vision of the Promised Land, but, as has been suggested, it is by no means a clear reflection that is present in the poem.

6. God's purpose in creation is a subject that interests our poet even as it does most of us. He raises the question and also offers an answer in "A Passage to India":

"Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
The earth to be spanned, connected by network,
The people to become brothers and sisters,
The races, to marry and be given in marriage"

and again in "Neighbors" we have a pleasing thought-picture of the march of generations:

"Down from the gardens of Asia, descending, radiating
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them."

It is stimulating to think with the poet of humanity marching forth into the realms of life 'radiating' rather than morose, or hesitant, trepidating as other poets have conceived it. Quite in harmony with this joy of living is the nature-poem entitled "Proud Music of the Storm," and even in this music Whitman assures us 'I hear the sound of the Hebrew lyre.' It is very interesting indeed that Whitman discerns the Hebrew note in the proud music of the storm and not alone the soft, sad chant other singers seek and find. Himself of a robust physical and spiritual nature he easily comes in intimate contact with the robust and the strong elements in the Jewish nature.

7. The poet's prime interest is man and of all men he is interested in himself and he is quite outspoken in this

feeling. "This Dust Was Once the Man" is a title which in its very utterance conveys a meaningful message and is easily traceable to the Old Testament, 'Dust thou art and to dust wilt thou return.' And at last we meet with Walt Whitman, the weird, unintelligible poet in his peculiar effort to present himself to the reader in some phase of the Creator. It is in "Chanting the Square Deific" that mystic or to be less courteous, that nonsensical selection, we read his not to be understood fancy, 'from this side Jehovah am I.' In his self-appreciation he beholds himself

"Walking the old hills of Judea"

and he does not hesitate to

"Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah"

and doing something just as unintelligible with other deities of antiquity.

8. There are those who say that it is difficult to imagine Whitman as having any definite notion on any subject. Still we must do him the justice of acknowledging that he makes the effort to explain his attitude on God and religion:

"I do not despise you priests"

It is quite generous of him and he is a good-natured man in general. Yet we are offered a sane philosophy for our theology:

"And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God
For I, who am curious about each, am not curious about God.

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand
God not in the least.

In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass."

We have here a suggestion of perhaps pantheism in 'behold God in every object' while the sentiment of 'be not

curious about God' spells the message of Ecclesiastes, and in the last line of the citation before us the poet falls back on the ancient 'image of God' expression.

9. The poet takes an interest in Palestine, a casual interest, it appears, but he is not willing to neglect it in his "Song of the Exposition,"

> "Repeat at Jerusalem-place the notice high on Jaffa's gate, and on Mount Moriah."

It may be merely that the poet has a good business-eye and cares not to neglect any human settlement in advertising the exposition, still we have in these lines evidences of his intrest in the Jewish land or in the Bible Land.

What sort of an influence have the Scriptures exerted upon Whitman is difficult to estimate. As has been shown, he makes but rare use of Biblical lore, and only infrequent and repeated use of the terms Eve and Adam, as synonyms for man and woman, of the Garden of Eden, of Jehovah, and there are a few stylistic touches. Here and there we meet with some trace of a confused, chaotic Bible thought or sentiment, distorted beyond clear recognition.

10. One more fact needs to be stated: Regarding himself as a man of the world, unprejudiced and tolerant to all, a brother of all races, he naturally mentions the Hebrew or the Jew whenever he makes mention of other races, and he also finds occasions to name Jerusalem or Judaea when he speaks of other lands and capitals. And yet Whitman confesses himself in a sense a nationalist, an American, who looks upon the world from his post as an American. He concludes an essay entitled, "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," a prose review of his works, with the statement, the message to the imaginative genius of the

West, that in order to develop first class nationaliy, it must accept "What Herder taught young Goethe that really great poetry is always, like the Homeric or Biblical Canticles, the result of a national spirit, and not the privilege of a polished and select few." It is true that Whitman regarded himself the exponent of American and of universal democracy and that he employs American democracy as his starting point, and it is also true that he appreciates and understands the spirit of Hebraism and more specifically of the Bible but it is a confused and a slight and not at all intrinsic influence of the Scriptures that we are dealing with in an estimate of Whitman's verse.

CHAPTER XI.

The Bible In Patriotic Song.

1. The nature and the volume of Biblical influence upon American patriotic poetry is quite a surprise. Contrary to expectations that the Anglo Saxon nation reared and nurtured in the atmosphere of the Bible would respond to its message and to its spirit in rich and generous measure, this is not the case in the degree and to the extent to justify anticipation. But the influence of the Biblei s surely and unequivocally there. As a general statement the following may be set forth: Scriptural influence in American patriotic poetry is not deep-set, but occasionally intense and not inconsiderable.

2. Several of the so-called patriotic poems evidence no direct Biblical influence at all. Among these should be classed the anonymously written 'Yankee Doodle' and the old version of 'Dixie.' 'Columbia, Gem of the Ocean,' betrays the use of only a few Biblical terms, to wit: incense, spices, and the phrase, "perfumes as of Eden." 'America,' written by Samuel Francis Smith, reveals the sentiments of freedom and of love of land. The expression, "Land where my fathers died" is an instance of Biblical stylistic influence, as are also those other expressions, "Our Fathers' God" and "Protect us by Thy might." The poem also contains what is by far more important, an entire stanza conceived in the style of the Book of Psalms:

"Let music swell the breezes
And ring from all the trees,
Let mortals' tongues awake
Let all that breathe partake
Let rocks their silence break."

We have here the Biblical notion of nature participating to the full in the joy of freedom. It bears comparison to several Psalms.

3. The "Star Spangled Banner" by Scott Key, composed during an hour of sturm and stress, a Revolutionary Hymn, is profuse with Biblical expressions, such as, 'havoc of war, the battle's confusion, pollution, the terror of flight, the gloom of the grave, war's desolation,' and the interesting slogan, "In God Is Our Trust."

4. "Maryland, My Maryland," a secession hymn, shows no Biblical association whatsoever, but on the other hand "Dixie" by Albert Pike, does offer the following evidences:

"stronger than lions, swifter than eagles"

adopted from David's lament at the death of Saul and Jonathan in II.Sam. and the appeal to fight

"Till the spoilers are defeated
Till the Lord's work is completed."

Whittier and Holmes have to their credit some rallying hymns in connection with the Civil War, but those are of a partisan rather than of an all American patriotic nature.

5. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," by Julia Ward Howe, is the only patriotic song that is truly and intensely solemn and religious in its tone. The author exults at the fact that

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,"

and she invokes "the fateful lightning of his terrible swift

sword." He will "crush the serpent with his heel," "He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat," and the concluding sentiment,

"O, be swift my soul, to answer him; be jubilant my feet."

Holmes' "God Save the Flag" enjoys the distinction of being the only patriotic hymn which makes use of Biblical lore:

"Burning with star-fire, but never consuming"
"Vainly the prophets of Baal would rend it,
Vainly his worshippers pray for its fall."

"Borne on the deluge of old usurpations,
Drifted our Ark o'er the desolate seas,
Bearing the rainblow of hope to the nations."

We have here clear instances of Biblical lore, allusions to the Burning Bush in Exodus, a possible allusion to the scene at Carmel in I Kings, and to Noah's ark and the rainbow that appeared after the flood in Genesis.

6. The following may be stated in conclusion of this study. The Biblical spirit is unquestionably present in American patriotic poetry, and the same is true of Scriptural style and of somewhat of its lore. Especially are such influences felt in the works of the New England authors. The earlier patriotic poets in the Revolutionary period, known as the atheistic period, were influenced by the Biblical style, perhaps subconsciously, and this fact may account for the omission of its lore.

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